

**A COMPARISON OF HOME AND SCHOOL
LITERACY LEARNING FOR CHILDREN
AGED 4 - 6 YEARS**

WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO READING

PATRICIA MOORCROFT-CUCKLE

**THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF PhD**

MAY 1993

**INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON**



ABSTRACT

The intention of the study was to investigate and compare home and school literacy curricula for a sample of children aged four to six, and the children's experiences of them. The aim was to develop and evaluate a method which could be used more widely to answer various research questions about the effects on children of different curricula experiences.

A model of literacy curriculum development in home and school was proposed, related to beliefs about literacy and psychological, social and practical factors. The method was to collect and analyze detailed data from eleven triads of child, parent and teacher. Descriptions were drawn of the adults beliefs, delivery of the curricula and the children's experiences; home and school were compared for individual children. Adults' data were collected by checklists, semi-structured interviews, observations and tape recordings. Children's data were collected by semi-structured interviews, observations, tape recordings and samples of writing from home and school, the child reading aloud being a focus.

For this sample a number of conclusions were drawn. Parents and teachers planned similar curricula and parents as well as teachers were highly competent in delivering the curricula. Some children experienced different curricula at home and school, or over time in either setting, but transferred from one curricula to the other without apparent difficulties. Where difficulties arose, they were generally in the area of communication between the adults, specifically related to the parents' uncertainties about what they planned for and delivered to their children.

The contribution of the study to existing literature is in providing a richer picture of development where home provision is relatively good, and in providing a useful and meaningful framework for comparing children's experiences in different settings where home/school or school/school contrasts are expected to have educational implications.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	2
CHAPTER 1 LITERACY CURRICULA IN HOME AND SCHOOL - AN INTRODUCTION	8
NEED FOR A FRAMEWORK	8
LAWTON'S MODEL	8
A REDEFINED MODEL	10
GENERAL ISSUES	14
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW - CURRICULA FOR LITERACY DEVELOPMENT	16
LITERACY AT HOME - A SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE	16
LITERACY AT SCHOOL	27
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	33
METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS	37
CHAPTER 3 THE PRELIMINARY STUDIES	41
AIM AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDIES	41
STUDY 1 - CHILDREN'S WRITING AT HOME	41
STUDY 2 - INTERVIEWING PARENTS AND CHILDREN AT HOME	42
STUDY 3 - OBSERVATION IN THE CLASSROOM	54
STUDY 4 - HOME AND SCHOOL EXPERIENCES WITH TRIADS OF CHILD, PARENT AND TEACHER	62
CONTRIBUTION OF THE PRELIMINARY STUDIES TO THE MAIN STUDY	81

CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY FOR THE MAIN STUDY	83
THE AIM OF THE MAIN STUDY AND RESEARCH DESIGN	83
DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESEARCH TOOLS	84
THE RESEARCH TOOLS USED	86
CONSTRUCTING THE SAMPLE	91
CARRYING OUT THE DATA COLLECTION	94
DATA ANALYSIS	100
CHAPTER 5 THE MAIN STUDY	105
INTRODUCTION TO THE TRIADS	105
RELATING THE TOOLS TO THE DESCRIPTIONS	105
RELATING THE DESCRIPTIONS TO THE MODEL OF CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DELIVERY	106
PRESENTATION OF THE TRIADS	107
THE FOUR YEAR OLDS - CASE 1	110
CASE 2	132
THE FIVE YEAR OLDS - CASE 3	138
CASE 4	160
CASE 5	170
CASE 6	178
CASE 7	183
CASE 8	199
THE SIX YEAR OLDS - CASE 9	203
CASE 10	226
CASE 11	231

CHAPTER 6 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	238
OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS	238
THE NATURE OF THE CURRICULA AND THEIR PLANNING	238
COMPARING THE SCHOOLS AND AGE GROUPS	238
SCHOOL CURRICULA	240
HOME CURRICULA	241
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	243
COMPARING ALL TEACHERS AND PARENTS	247
COMPARING CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES AT HOME AND SCHOOL	249
TRANSFERRING BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL	253
 CHAPTER 7 EVALUATION OF THE STUDY	 255
ADEQUACY OF THE METHODOLOGY	255
THE STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY - ADDING TO EXISTING LITERATURE	256
FURTHER ISSUES - IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE	257
EFFECTIVENESS OF SYSTEMS OF COMMUNICATION	259
CONCLUSION	260
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 262

APPENDICES	269
1 Synopsis of Duffy G. and Anderson L. (82)	269
2 Preliminary study 1 - Letter inviting written work	272
3 Preliminary study 2 interview schedule - not discussed in detail	273
4 Preliminary study 2 interview schedule - parent and child	275
5 Preliminary study 4 interview schedule - parents and children	277
6 Preliminary study 4 interview schedule - teachers	279
9 Main study interview schedule for teachers	281
10 Main study interview schedule for parents	283
11 Parts of checklist used for observation schedule	285
12 Questioning of adults and children during HCR and questions about children's preferences	287
13 Synopsis of research - handout for schools	288
14 Letter inviting parent and child to participate in main study	289
15 Instructions for validating descriptions	290
16 Transcript of CASE 1 parent interview	292
17 Transcript of CASE 1 teacher interview	307
18 Transcript of CASE 1 child interview	317
19 Main study checklist for teachers - completed for CASE 1	319
20 Main study checklist for parents - completed for CASE 1	330

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1	LAWTON'S MODEL	9
FIGURE 2	LAWTON'S MODEL REDEFINED - A NEW MODEL	13
FIGURE 3	TYPES OF DATA FROM MEMBERS OF THE TRIADS	83
FIGURE 4	CONTRIBUTING FACTORS IN LEARNING TO READ	249

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was undertaken with the support of the
Economic and Social Research Council.

I would like to thank my supervisor
Professor Hazel Francis
for her constant help, support and encouragement.

I would also like to thank all the
children, parents and teachers
who took part in the research.

CHAPTER ONE LITERACY CURRICULA IN HOME AND SCHOOL - AN INTRODUCTION

The main aim of the research was to investigate early literacy learning at home and school in terms of concurrent experiences for individual children. An early interest was in children transferring between schools as well as transferring from home to school and therefore experiencing more than one curricula. It was anticipated that the nature of the curricula would differ and that children might react in different ways to them e.g. be oblivious of different demands, be confused by them or able to adapt to. Early literacy experiences could be seen as a formal or informal induction into the practices or values of socio-cultural communities and as such there could be many different curricula.

NEED FOR A FRAMEWORK

The main research questions concern literacy curricula for home and school, their nature and influences on their planning, and how children are affected by the two curricula. To examine these questions a framework for description and analysis that could be applied to different settings was sought. The work of Lawton (1978) was selected with the intention of using his model as a useful starting point for a framework for curriculum development and analysis; the intention was not to evaluate Lawton's work in depth.

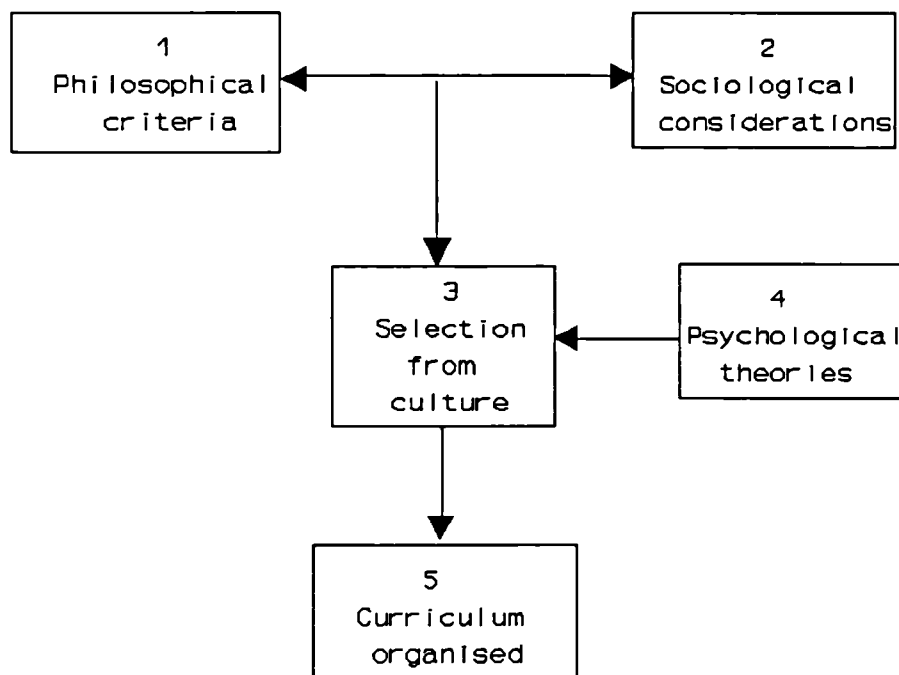
LAWTON'S MODEL

Lawton describes a view of education that is situation centred, that is aiming to prepare the child for situations likely to be encountered as an adult. It has elements of the child-centred view (upon which much of primary school curriculum has been based in the last twenty-five years), the subject centred view (on which much of secondary school practice has been based) and the society centred view (which reflects demands of future employers and society in general). These separate views are incomplete in so far as no single one covers the complex process of educational

practice, but combined, they form a basis for general curriculum planning for schools.

Looking at the situation centred model (Figure 1) Lawton's description of (1) philosophical criteria would relate to elements of the subject or knowledge-centred view; (2) sociological considerations would relate to the society-centred view; and (3) psychological theories would relate to the child-centred views.

FIGURE 1 - LAWTON'S MODEL



Lawton's model includes the following elements;

Philosophical criteria

Aims

Worthwhileness

The structure of knowledge

Psychological theories

Development

Learning

Instruction

Motivation

Sociological considerations

Social change

Technological change

Ideological change

(1) and (2) influence each other according to time and place (1) representing more permanent elements and (2) changing with time. Elements are taken from them in (3), according to the particular culture, and (3) will be influenced by (4) psychological theories and will lead to (5) a curriculum being organized. As Lawton suggests, this is an oversimplified view of a complex issue.

Lawton' model is both very general, being applicable across subject areas and to any school, where one would expect to find a formally planned and stated curriculum. As it stands it is not developed to cover informal educational contexts. But it is adaptable and therefore may be suitable as a basis for a model for home and school curricula whose elements are defined in a somewhat different way.

A REDEFINED MODEL

There are several principles governing the definition of a new model. We can assume that, as Lawton says, "Everything that a teacher does in a classroom involves values, sets of assumptions, views about the nature of children and of knowledge - all of which are the basis of educational theory." We can also assume that if this is true of the teacher it is also true of parents with regard to the education they provide in the home; this would be so regardless of the degree of similarity between the two views of education, whether the home education is instigated by the parents or directed by the school or the extent to which the parents can express their views formally.

Schools are expected to have an explicit curricula which they can justify and within which teachers plan their lessons. Parents not be expected to plan in the same way although they would be expected to have some thoughts about what they do which could be elicited; their statements about what they do and why, would be implicit of their planning. In other words, the parents may be providing a curriculum (albeit informal) at home that is based on their

values, assumptions and knowledge about children, what is to be learned and the learning process.

Because a model for this study has a specific rather than general use i.e. it is restricted to literacy curricula for young children, there is a need for different elements of the model; these are shown below.

For the purposes of this study Lawton's "Philosophical criteria" become

Beliefs about literacy development which include the following elements:

- a Broad aims in teaching literacy
- b The value of being literate
- c Beliefs about the process of learning to read
- d Beliefs about the conditions needed for learning to read including skills adults think children need, the necessity of hearing children read, the role of practice, repetition, reinforcement and praise
- e Beliefs about who can teach reading

a and b are related to Lawton's elements of aims and worthwhileness, c and d are included here as general philosophical ideas and e will depend on the local culture and the extent to which parent or teacher is considered capable of teaching.

For the purposes of this study, Lawton's "Sociological considerations" become

Social influences which include the following elements:

- a Government and legal demands including National Curriculum and local policy
- b Expectation of parental involvement (partly dependent on the local social group)
- c Demographic factors that determine the perceived needs of particular groups
- d General and specific cultural expectations
- e Influence of peers

a is similar to Lawton's social change, b to ideological change and c - e general social influences that are more specifically related to the needs of the present study.

For the purposes of this study, Lawton's "Psychological theories" become

Psychology of the participants (i.e. both adults and children) which include the following elements:

Individual characteristics that affect learning - ability, motivation, mood and inclination, learning style and stages of development.

This includes psychological "theories" that parents and teachers might reasonably be considered to understand, similar to Lawton's psychological elements.

Practical aspects include the following elements:

a Available time, space, manpower, energy and materials

b Instructions sent or received from school

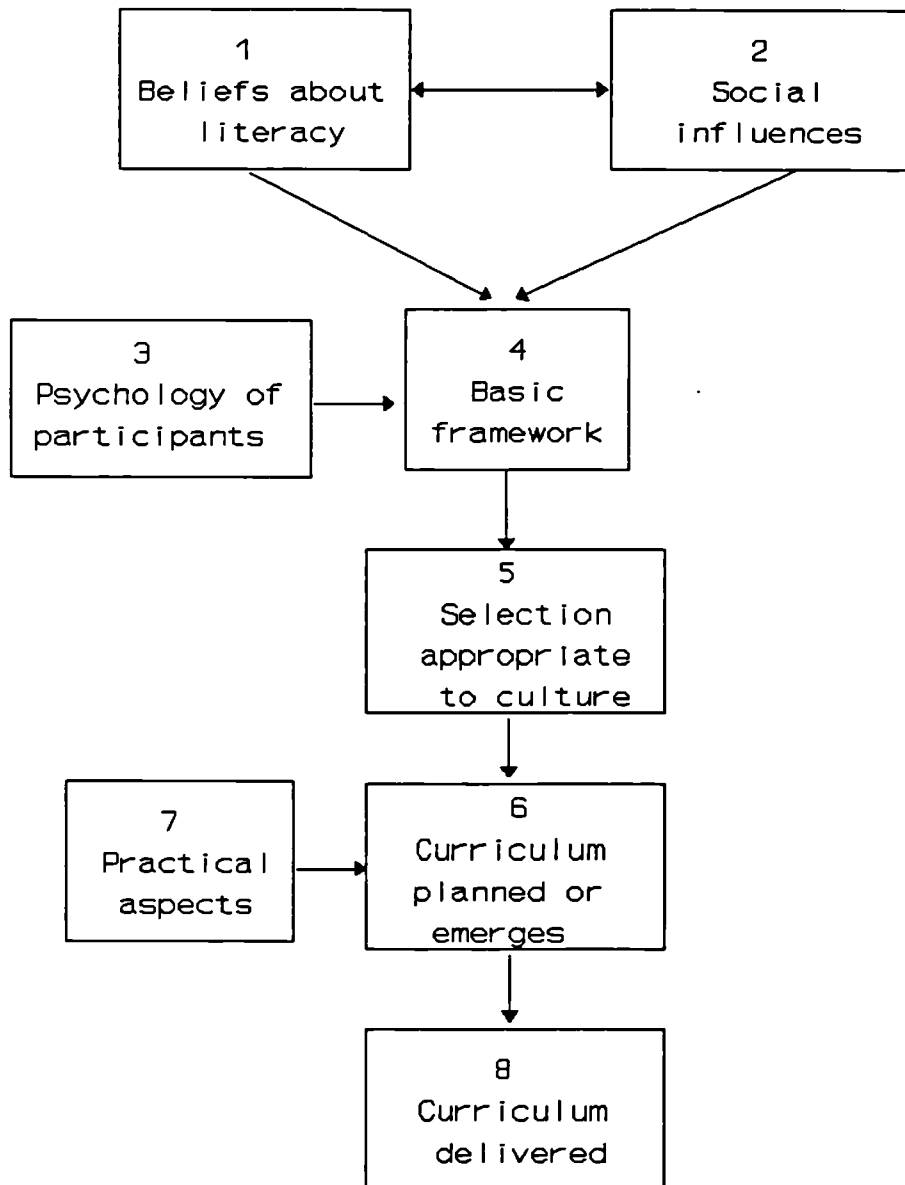
a are obvious practical elements while b) are to be considered if the school is partly or wholly directive in providing a programme for home use.

This model can be applied to a specific age range (4-6 years), subject (literacy), and to both school and home curricula. The factors described may operate both formally in the case of school, and implicitly in the case of home.

Beliefs about literacy (1) and social influences (2) operate separately in planning a basic framework, for instance what knowledge is worth transmitting and what is useful to society. But they also interact, for instance changing social needs (such as requirements of National Curriculum) will affect ideas about what knowledge should be transmitted. Psychology of participants (4), has a direct effect on the basic framework determining what teaching method to be employed and what rate of learning to expect. There may also be an interaction between beliefs

about literacy and psychology of participants, for instance the importance in learning of individual differences and the potential harm of pressure are psychological aspects connected with liberal Western philosophies which are concerned with individualism.

FIGURE 2 LAWTON'S MODEL REDEFINED - A NEW MODEL



From the basic framework (4) selections are made for a curriculum appropriate to the culture (5). At both a general and local level these will be important. In a British educational setting items will be selected for a

culture in which, generally, children have many years of schooling in which to learn and have a multitude of materials and learning experiences both in the school and outside. This is not necessarily true on a local level, and local circumstances will have to be taken into account (for instance the child's pre-school literacy experiences or how much the parents will be likely to help the school literacy learning process at home). A curriculum is planned or emerges (more probably the case in the informality of the home) at (6). But what Lawton leaves out altogether are practical factors(7); how the curriculum is delivered (8) in both home and school is very much dependent on these factors.

GENERAL ISSUES

Lawton's is a model for developing a curriculum, that is how the curriculum comes into being. The present research examines delivery as well as planning; a central interest is in how children experience the curricula that are being delivered. Planning and delivering may, of course, differ; for example an adult speaking of the psychology of the child might say praise is important for reinforcement (this is curriculum design) but praise may not be observed during a literacy activity (this is the delivery and what children will experience). Using the newly defined model, planning and delivery can be compared.

As this study considers both planning and delivery a methodology which is observational is necessary; the delivery of the curriculum is what is observed. Reading aloud is a particularly suitable activity to observe because it gives the opportunity to observe many aspects of teaching reading (what skills are encouraged, how they are reinforced, what materials are used and how the child reacts to the experience).

While this model can cover the planning and delivery of both home and school curricula, it cannot cover every issue that arises; for instance the curricula provided need to be

compared to consider the effect on children of changing between the two. Issues regarding communications and areas of conflict or harmony between home and school will be important, although outside the limits of the model.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW - CURRICULA FOR LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

The literature was reviewed in relation to literacy curricula; the intentions were to seek practices which are widespread, and common to both home and school and to look for ways to identify similarities between curricula.

LITERACY AT HOME - A SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Literacy learning takes place outside of the school setting in many different communities, the meaning and implications being different according to the setting. A home curriculum (or agenda) may exist, but as Leichter (1984) points out, it is structured differently from that in schools and should be understood on its own terms.

Literacy is part of a particular socio-cultural setting which influences the form, limits and intentions of literacy for a particular social group. Schieffelin and Cochrane-Smith (1984) suggest that rather than emerging naturally literacy emerges out of a particular cultural orientation and this is evident when different cultural groups are examined. Several social settings and literacy experiences are described below, after which their relationships to the proposed model of curriculum are discussed.

First, three communities are described in which literacy is very restricted in its intention, the material taught and the manner of transmitting it to other members of the communities.

The Kaluli tribe of Papua New Guinea (Schieffelin and Cochrane-Smith, 1984) were only exposed to literacy recently by Christian missionaries, and teaching was offered to adult males almost exclusively for bible reading. There were enormous practical restrictions on gaining literacy namely inaccessibility of the missionaries who taught, the disruption of domestic routine to attend lessons and scarcity and expense of materials. Literacy was

also considered difficult to achieve therefore it was pursued by only a few. Generally, literacy was considered to have no value for children, although one couple became literate and during reading practice the mother shared her illustrated booklet with her child of two, at the child's request. During the child's sole literacy activity, only the pictures (never printed words) were referred to; the mother never drew the child's attention to the pictures but would participate in what Teale (1984) terms "query, label and feedback" with regard to the pictures and there would be some discussion centred round the illustrations. At thirty months the child used a "reading register" when looking at the book, and although in some respects her activities were similar to Western children in literate societies, the mother placed no value on the child's literacy activities.

The African Vai tribe (Scribner and Cole, 1981) had similarly restricted literacy acquired by adult males. The Vai syllabary was learned mainly for purposes of communication between friends, relatives and small-business acquaintances (in a mobile society where communications systems are limited), and for recording business and family details. Instruction was usually on a one-to-one basis between friends often for very short sessions, using pertinent examples of letters and other documents to teach the syllabary and standard forms of address and structure of the text. (Syllabary charts were not usually available). When this was learned the writer attempted to compile his own letter sometimes after a matter of months or even weeks. The close similarity between examples of letters suggests that reading and writing vocabulary was limited to standard forms. Because at the time of the research books were very scarce, there would be little opportunity to expand reading interests. Some males had limited literacy in English and probably learned to recite the Koran using printed texts although very few learned to write or read commentaries on the texts.

A group of Chinese newcomers to the USA had a definite social need for literacy and Schieffelin and Cochrane-Smith (1984) describe an interesting role reversal whereby a bilingual nine year old boy helped his non-English speaking family in medical, tax, work and other official tasks requiring literacy. The older family members were literate in Chinese, although there was very little written material available at home; it was not customary for adults to read children stories and the study boy did not read in English for pleasure at home although he read instructions for his hobbies. The boy was highly motivated to learn, very competent in English literacy and very helpful to a wide circle of adults, but the home literacy environment was not one in which a child would typically be expected to succeed in literacy.

Within distinct socio-cultural settings, the Kaluli, Vai and Chinese newcomers provide examples of "literacy curricula" very restricted in their intentions and experiences. The curricula appear to be influenced by a social need and a restricted belief in the value of a particular type and level of literacy. For instance, in the extreme case of the Kaluli where literacy was unknown, an individual could not have deep-seated beliefs and values about literacy; presumably, their beliefs and values would be connected with satisfying a current need.

In other work, three working-class sub-cultures are described that are considered to be outside the "mainstream" of Americans socially, economically and educationally. Black Trackton and white Roadville (Brice-Heath, 1983) and a group of young single mothers (Miller, Nemianu and De Jong, 1986) are literate communities; however, literacy has limited meaning and uses and the "literacy atmosphere" in the home is circumscribed and distinct.

Roadville white parents provided books and read them to their pre-school children as a preparation for school and

because they proclaimed a belief in the intrinsic value of books, though books were limited to nursery rhymes, alphabet and "real-life" situation stories. The practice of reading stories stopped abruptly as the child started school, and the child was expected to learn to read, then read to learn for the purpose of doing well in school. Parents ideas about the intrinsic value of books were not modelled in their reading behaviour, which was limited largely to practical information for daily living, for news and for social interaction through letters and cards to friends and relatives. Reading for pleasure was minimal and magazines on current affairs and hobbies, to which many families subscribed, were often left unread.

In black Trackton books for children and adults were non-existent and children were expected to "do to learn", to "know by doing". For adults, reading material was usually practical e.g. bills, lists and community information. In both Trackton and Roadville Bible reading confirmed an established belief; in Roadville such reading was approved of and private whereas in Trackton private reading was regarded as an antisocial habit tolerated only in the highly-respected and elderly residents.

Attitudes to the printed word contrasted in the two communities. Roadville residents regarded the printed word as authoritative and literal and reading as a private activity. Trackton residents regarded the printed word (news items, political circulars and most official letters to families) as a symbol of authority. Often text was not interpreted literally, but every line was searched for alternative meaning. And far from being private, the reading of a letter could become the subject of lively, public discussion. These different attitudes prevailed for the individual's own writing and spoken language. A prayer written in advance for a church service would be read as it was written by a Roadville church-goer and telling community-related anecdotes publicly had strict boundaries where absolute truth was of paramount importance. In

contrast, a prayer might be used as a framework and embellished in a spontaneous way by a Trackton church-goer and their stories were not worth recounting unless they were exaggerated in every way.

In the third working-class group, three very young single mothers and their toddlers, who were largely dependent on the extended family, were studied. The mothers and children engaged in literacy experiences including reading, writing, reciting rhymes, alphabet and spelling; experiences usually occurred informally in the company of the family. The children attended while the mothers named pictures in books and the children sometimes imitated this with their dolls. Adults read stories sometimes, and children looked at books and magazines with or without a partner, silently or with accompanying talk. The mothers "read" books with the children in a similar way to the Kaluli mother, talking about the pictures and labelling them but not referring to the text. Mothers also instructed e.g. "say bird"; they asked "what" questions rather than the higher level "why" questions. For the two year olds studied, an important aspect of the "reading" (as well as its entertainment value) was the close relationship between mother and child, the literacy experience apparently being secondary.

A fourth group considered to be outside the "mainstream" were pre-school Fundamentalist Christians (Zinsser 1986) whose literacy experience was distinct. In this group, the children attended instructional classes (in the vacation and on Sundays), the purpose of which was to learn Bible texts which could be repeated in times of trouble or doubt; the Bible was taken literally as the word of God and as such it was not permissible to question or interpret texts. They resembled the Kaluli in that the sole purpose of the instruction was for Bible knowledge, they recited (without interpretation) like the Via when they learned the Koran, however the Fundamentalists came from literate communities. The meaning of the literacy experience was very restricted. The language from the King James Bible had

little meaning for children except what they could glean from the analogous stories they heard; they "caught on" to songs without accompanying explanation. These children were not literate as they were not taught to read the texts, yet they assumed the pose of literate persons. They were surrounded by written messages, they carried the Bible every day and sometimes opened it in a reading position, they memorised written text and were practised in listening when text was read aloud. These literacy-related experiences were central to the lives of the community in which they lived, consequently were very highly valued.

These, then, are four literate communities belonging to separate socio-cultural groups. Literacy appeared to be valued by members for its practical uses and as a means of becoming educated and progressing socially or for a restricted personal or social purpose rather than for its intrinsic or pleasurable value. It would be difficult for children to value the pleasurable aspects of reading for a group not accustomed to seeing people read and write for pleasure in the home.

"Mainstream middle-class" literate social groups who take literacy for granted have been much studied and four such studies are described. The literacy habits and experiences of the groups are generally used as a baseline (Schieffelin and Cochrane-Smith 1984).

One group attended nursery in Philadelphia; the adults in the community appeared to take a high level of literacy for granted. Unlike the previous groups described, there was no single context in which literacy would occur, children interacted with print in many aspects of life - church, community, social events, in the home in books and on a variety of materials; writing was used to express thoughts and feelings as well as for practical uses. Reading stories was a valued way to spend time; adults reading to children was a regular and frequent activity and as well as having literacy value, was characterised by

physical closeness and a relaxed atmosphere. For the three to four year olds in this group, parents did not emphasise the alphabet or printing but assumed that the child would become interested in these aspects as part of development.

A study of pre-school, early readers (Clark 1984) describes a very similar "literacy atmosphere" to the above. The social background of the study children varied, but what the parents had in common were their use of libraries and love of books, their knowledge of and sensitivity to their children and the interesting way in which they discussed their children's abilities.

Hannon and James (1990) investigated home and school literacy experiences in pre-school nursery groups of three to four year olds in a socially mixed sample. They found very high levels of parental interest and enjoyment in literacy activities which focused on books and other print including environmental print; considerable value was placed by parents on these activities in helping literacy. Most children enjoyed books which were either read aloud by the parents or which they looked at by themselves. None of the children could read but there was some instruction involving pointing out letters and words. There was a very high level of interest in writing involving copying or having spellings dictated by a parent or older sibling. Most parents thought they had succeeded in teaching something, although three quarters said they would like to know more about how to help.

Elliott (1992) examined in detail the curriculum that was provided at home for children of five to eight from different social groups. As the children were already at school and all the schools encouraged parental involvement of some description, there was some overlap between home and school initiated activities, but parents were asked about the activities they provided independent of the school. Overall there was a large range of literacy activities reported. These included reading and telling

stories, discussing pictures and stories, teaching nursery rhymes, writing names and captions on pictures and collecting words; parents provided a wide range of materials, books, games and puzzles for these activities. Both working class and middle class groups reported a variety of activities, but there were differences between the groups. Middle class parents were far more likely to have books and provide a rich, varied curriculum at home (some working class homes had virtually no books in them). Middle-class parents were more concerned with enhancing comprehension in general by discussion and explanation and with making activities enjoyable; their children knew more about the different functions of reading and writing than working class children and were more advanced in literacy skills as measured in school.

There is plenty of evidence from these last four studies that in "middle class" homes there is a rich literacy curriculum provided outside or before school. The participants belonged to socio-cultural groups where, typically, literacy was considered important and valued for practical and pleasurable reasons throughout life. Generally in these groups home literacy-related activities are taken for granted, status is attached to presenting pre-school children with educational experiences, acceleration in education tends to be desired (so long as it is not detrimental to the child's emotional state or parent/child relationship). Home literacy involves considerable reading of environmental print and "emerges" as a part of daily life and play; hearing children read (HCR) at home may be important as a later addition. For those who value, want and know how to use them, educational materials and books are readily available; for lower income groups libraries provide books, newsagents and supermarkets provide inexpensive writing, colouring, sticking and cutting materials and there is a wealth of pictorial material in catalogues and leaflets delivered to homes regularly.

The home can be seen as a micro-culture influenced by cultural and personal beliefs which will influence the nature of literacy experiences delivered. The nature of the curriculum obviously varies for individual families and literacy and related activities will have different values. For instance, in the scale of important family life experiences (poor housing, poverty, emotional or domestic upheaval) home literacy may have little importance for the parents (Elliott, 1990). Where parents do provide rich literacy curricula two important points arise. First, most parents do not approve of applying pressure; whatever the parents provide is generally at the request of or with the agreement of the child, e.g. Schieffelin and Cochrane-Smith (1984), Clark (1984), Hannon and James (1990) and Elliott (1992). Second, some parents are unsure about whether what they teach is correct e.g. letter names/sounds, Hannon and James, (1990). Teachers who worry about parental pressure and parents teaching correctly should be aware of these points.

Relating the home curriculum to later literacy learning

The question arises as to the usefulness of the home curriculum in later learning to read. Much might depend on the similarity between home and school. Leichter (1984), suggests that only a small part of the home literacy curriculum involves instruction. In the last four studies described parents generally did not consider themselves to teach directly, although modelling, demonstrating, pointing to letters and words and answering questions about aspects of literacy can be considered to be forms of teaching. The home curriculum may be informal in that literacy related activities often occur in the context of play or relaxation-time reading and may not be planned explicitly with a view to teaching reading.

However, besides entertaining and satisfying the child's curiosity about literacy, children do appear to learn; some pre-school literacy experiences prepare children for the formal school reading curriculum (Tizard et al, 1988) and

Elliott (92) concluded that the middle class children started the formal process of learning to read at school far better equipped than working class children (in general). Higher order experiences i.e. interpreting, questioning and making inferences about text is of more value when it comes to learning to read, according to Elliott, (1992), where reading involves making sense of written language, using context clues and predicting text (apart from the mechanics of decoding). Literacy-related behaviour such as page turning, holding a book correctly and a physically close relaxed atmosphere as experienced by some pre-school children may be useful, but how well do these experiences prepare children for reading compared to "higher-order" literacy experiences?

In some literate groups, the children's literacy experiences seem to be so impoverished or limited as to be of little value to later learning (for instance the children from groups described previously from outside the "mainstream"). In other groups the "literacy behaviour" learned may be counter-productive. For instance, Zinsser (1986) suggests that while the Fundamentalists may have adopted literacy behaviour and have learned some school like behaviours like listening, sharing, turn taking and the kind of answers teachers want to elicit, if they enrol in a regular state school they may have difficulties. She says in the Bible classes they operate within a "strong frame", that is do not have options and do not interpret. If the school has a weak frame, i.e. is innovative and expects initiative, then they will have to learn literacy differently and this may be difficult.

With regard to the written and spoken language background of children from Tracton and Roadville, Brice-Heath (1983) relates how fifth grade Tractoners wrote stories which were dramatic and full of dialogue but lacking facts while Roadvillers wrote factual stories which were unimaginative; neither were judged to be adequate. In a novel situation where Trackton-type children carried out a reading project

which relied heavily on reading and writing oral accounts from familiar and interested adults on community based subjects, reading competence improved dramatically and attitudes to literacy improved in so far as children came to see themselves as "readers". The exercise seemed to fulfil the condition that reading should be "functional, relevant and meaningful" for individuals (Schieffelin and Cochrane-Smith, 1984).

Implications for the present study

It is difficult to relate the information from the studies described to the proposed model as little is known about the beliefs, values and intentions of those studied, but certain inferences can be made. Inferences can be drawn from some of these studies in relation to the proposed model; parents' descriptions of helping children inferred that parents had underlying beliefs about how children make use of print and how they might become literate as well as deep seated beliefs and values concerning literacy; for these groups, literacy is regarded as a part of routine development. The type of curriculum that is delivered is dependent on the adult's values, the extent to which they value reading, the kind of material they value and the purpose of reading (practical or aesthetic). Different cultures will value literacy differently; values will be culturally embedded to a large extent and values will differ from group to group. The "mainstream" parents appear to share teachers and educators values about literacy and learning in general.

The present study aims to investigate the adult's values and intentions, in providing a home curriculum, particularly in relation to common literacy practices like reading aloud or hearing stories read.

If the intention at home is to help teach literacy, then questions arise as to how alike are the school and home curriculum, how helpful the home curriculum is and whether

the child can transfer from one setting to another what is learned in another setting. Using a model of curriculum design and delivery, observations and questions are designed to provide instruments to investigate these questions.

LITERACY AT SCHOOL

It is assumed by the writer that teachers will organise an appropriate literacy curriculum. Influences on the curricula might differ for individual teachers, but it would be expected that there would be overall similarities.

Regarding primary school experiences, Tizard et al (1986) examined a number of inner city schools and one area of interest was provision for literacy for four to seven year olds. The research gives an overall view of the primary school curricula and the mixed approach that teachers use in teaching literacy. They found that only 6% of teachers used a single reading scheme, the majority used a mixture of teaching material from different schemes for different children and many used colour coding for different levels of books. Most teachers supplemented the reading books with work sheets and reading games. "Breakthrough to literacy" material (see Mackay et al, 1970) which children used at their own pace, was used by more than half the teachers for reading and writing, and workbooks, "news" and topic writing was very common. Children spent 47% of their classroom time on language activities; 4% of time was spent in reading activities such as silent reading, looking at books, reading with other children or to the teacher from flashcards or books (nothing is said of the processes involved in hearing children read) and reading back their own writing, task instructions or reading games. Generally, children moved from the mechanics of reading and writing (i.e. knowledge of components of words and letter formation) to rules for deciphering and producing text (i.e. cues in reading and spelling conventions). In writing, children progressed through tracing, copying and producing without a model; developmental writing (i.e.

writing freely without reference to a model for spelling or letter formation) was not common. In the reception year and Year 1, one to three sentences were usually produced.

Much of literacy teaching in school centres on enabling children to write continuous prose, to acquire reading skills and to read text in books (rather than other types of print in the environment). It would be unusual to hear of teachers whose main way of hearing children read (HCR) focused on environmental print, signs and notices. Southgate et al (1981) noted that HCR from a book was the activity that teachers most commonly undertook in teaching reading; many indicated that it was the "backbone" of the teaching and monitoring of reading. Both Francis (1987a) and Campbell (1988) note that hearing children read (HCR) is a very widespread practice in both home and school. Teachers will have different beliefs about how children learn literacy; they may favour decoding, reading for meaning or a mixture of methods. Their beliefs will influence teaching strategies including their responses to HCR.

Tizard et al (1986) mention children reading to their teachers, although they do not describe details of HCR. Campbell (1988), however, describes in detail what happens in a number of classrooms in this important activity. The study (which relies on observation and speculation) suggests teachers hear reading for diagnostic and instructional purposes and to structure learning, and more specifically as follows:

- 1) For children to learn and practice and for teachers to diagnose problems
- 2) To foster interest and enjoyment in reading by sharing and being involved in a reading activity
- 3) To foster fluency, expression and comprehension
- 4) To check progress and accuracy
- 5) To instruct by e.g. encouraging use of context clues and to teach phonics

Examples in Campbell's work demonstrate that teachers do all these things during HCR.

Two important factors in Campbell's work are:

1) Descriptions of the kind of miscues children make when reading aloud (the term "miscue" is used in preference to error to indicate that children know something about the word read inaccurately) and

2) The teachers reactions to the miscues. From an intensive study of HCR Campbell devised seven categories of children's miscues as follows:

Substitution	Omission	Repetition	Sounding out
Insertion	Self-correction	Hesitation	

Discussing the miscues, Campbell suggests that insertions and omissions are made when the child is actively involved in the text and processing it fast. Substitutions indicate what analysis is being used, graphophonic (e.g. "me" for "made") syntactic and semantic (e.g. "a" for "the"); "stop" for "stay" indicates that graphophonic as well as syntactic and semantic analysis is being used.

Campbell describes six types of teacher's "moves" (i.e. reactions to miscues) underlined below.

1) non-response for "good" miscues that bear some clear relation to the word; if the miscue is syntactically and semantically correct, the teacher may leave it and allow the reading to continue or may wait for the child to make a self-correction.

For "not good" responses the teacher moves may be :

2) Word cuing e.g. Child: "It may by ...

Teacher: "It may ... "

The intonation may be questioning and suggest the child tries again.

- 3) Negative feedback (e.g. "It's not 'by'")
- 4) Provide (i.e. tells the word)
- 5) Phonic analysis (connected with the sound of the word)
- 6) Comprehension e.g. Child: "The boy gets (gives)"
Teacher: What does the boy do?

With regard to the effects of teacher "moves" on the child's present and future reading, Campbell suggests that word cuing is very helpful; 85% of word cues resulted in the child correcting the miscue. Word cuing leaves open the different options of context, phonetics and graphophonics to identify the word, and the child may be able to use this strategy in later silent reading. Negative feedback, without any instruction, gives the child information on his attempt at the word; it may be especially useful at the beginning of a sentence when moves are limited. Providing the word is not disruptive, helps the reading to progress smoothly and cuts down frustration for the child, but the child may become dependent and simply repeat text if a word is provided too often. Comprehension cues sometimes help, but can be disruptive. Phonic analysis often involves the initial letter, and 50% of words were corrected after this move; it provides a teaching opportunity, e.g. "magic e" which makes "pin" into "pine", but the child may be likely to use only the graphophonic route to identify the word.

Campbell's results are discussed at some length because they describe in detail an important activity and provide ways of analyzing reading aloud conveniently and methodically. The categories are manageable for relatively small amounts of data and are useful for the present study.

In a study to compare the moves of parents and teachers, Hannon et al (1986) devised twenty two categories to provide a wider range and take account of the intentions and likely effects of the moves (which were inferred). The

categories are explained in full in the above reference and will be referred to again later when comparing teachers and parents.

HCR is clearly a very widespread practice, and the activity involves different processes which may not all be equally beneficial; Clay (75) investigated the problem of children not benefitting from reading aloud, in so far as after one year at school they were not making much progress as readers. She examined HCR in relation to the whole literacy curriculum, and devised a means of diagnosing difficulties at an early stage, readjusted the curriculum for individual children, and gave individual daily half-hour sessions accordingly with the aim of returning children to their classes as average readers within a few months. Clay assumes that reading is "performance on a continuous text", so lessons included children reading texts of different levels of difficulty. The rationale and methods are described in the above reference, and their application to a small number of pioneer schools in England described in Wright (92).

A further aspect of early literacy in school that receives little attention in the literature is the practice of adults reading aloud to children. It is assumed that the benefits to children learning to read will be indirect connected with motivation and familiarity with text rather than directly teaching reading, although parents and teachers may not always be clear about this. This is compatible with an emergent view of literacy rather than a view of reading as a set of skills. Teale (1984) indicates that correlational studies show that reading to children helps their own reading in the following ways:

- a) Promotes understanding of the functions and uses of written language
- b) Promotes concepts of print, books, reading and the structure of written language
- c) Promotes positive attitudes to reading

- d) Helps understanding of reading strategies including ways of gaining meaning from text.

Implications for the present study

The work of Tizard et al (1986) says little about how teachers use the available material to teach, what strategies teachers use to help children become literate and why they do so, or how children react.

The literature discussed does not ask explicitly why individual adults hear reading, how they think it helps learning, how it fits in with their beliefs about the process of reading and the rest of the literacy curriculum - it does not relate teachers' theories to practice. Nor does it provide direct information on why parents and teachers respond to children's miscues in a particular way. It says nothing about children's reactions to teacher moves, except in terms of correction rates nor does it investigate whether children find the moves helpful, whether they like the help or whether they prefer different help. On the question of adults reading to children, teachers and parents are perhaps not always clear about why or how they think reading to children helps. The aim of the present work is to answer these questions and to relate HCR to planning and delivering literacy curricula.

Home and school literacy curricula differ and one obvious explanation for this is that the school is offering literacy for a different purpose to the home which coincides with a new stage of the child's development. It is assumed that what is offered in literacy learning at school will be aimed at teaching reading and will focus on skills to a greater or lesser degree; this is not necessarily the case at home where literacy learning may emerge as part of everyday life and play at the child's request. The question arises whether the home curriculum is influenced by the school when the child starts school, especially when parents are actively involved or co-opted by the school in their children's reading. This aspect is

considered further in the next section.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The preceding review section indicated that many parents provide rich and varied literacy curricula at home both pre-school and after the child starts school. However, once the child is at school parents may become "involved" in the child's reading in a different way. They may be expected to operate in the same way as the school and parental involvement may be regarded as an extension of school into the home.

Interest in parents helping with reading has grown since Hewison and Tizard (1980) demonstrated that all types of parents (including those with little English) could help their children with reading by hearing them read on a regular basis at home under the direction of the school. An improvement was found in attainment in those groups receiving regular parental help compared to groups who did not receive such help. Similar results were demonstrated in other studies (Wilby, 1981); however Hannon (1987) did not find the same effect and suggested that successful programmes may be influenced by the nature of the support parents receive, the previous extent of parental involvement and the socio-ethnic makeup of the families involved.

While interest has grown in recent years, not all schools were prepared to involve parents in helping with reading ten years ago. A study of heads' and teachers' attitudes to parental involvement in reading described in Hannon and Cuckle (1984) found that nearly three-quarters of heads and teachers thought that parents listening to children reading was an important way to help, but only a small proportion of children studied (about 10%) appeared to be heard on a regular basis. The reasons for the lack of involvement were not clear, although it was speculated that a more organised approach to parental help might encourage parents to be more involved. Tizard et al (1988) suggested that sending

books home piecemeal does not help achievement; success depends on organised intervention and considerable interaction between parents and teachers. Parents did understand methods when they were adequately explained for instance when "learning through play" was explained, scepticism and hostility turned to support.

Topping and Wolfenden (1985), described at length parental involvement schemes. Some schemes had been devised specifically for parents to help poor readers such as "paired reading" (PR), described in Topping (1986), and "prompt, pause and praise" (PPP), described in McNaughton, Glynne and Robinson (1981). It was clear from these studies that parents could use sophisticated techniques, although it was often the case that success was at least partly dependent on parents being thoroughly trained and on progress being monitored. These particular methods have lead to dramatic increases in children's abilities and further, Topping (1992) in long-term follow-up, showed that gains in reading attainment continue after the programme, although there is a deceleration after the initial period of helping.

Other schemes for involving parents in helping with reading have been less structured, for instance PACT (Parents and Children and Teachers Together) which was developed in Inner London and is described in Bloom (1987). The principle was that children take home a book to read with or to a parent and a comment card or book forms the basis of communication between home and school; the scheme was a flexible one, and many schools have adopted something similar either using graded readers or books of the child's choice (Tizard et al, 1988).

There is evidence that children who are helped at home are better readers in school. Francis (1975) asking children about their reading habits at home, concluded that although many children were read to at home this activity did not correlate with reading progress; the better readers were

those who did more reading aloud themselves at home. Regarding other forms of help given at home, Tizard et al (1988) stated that children who knew letter sounds at four and three quarters were better readers at seven and Bradley and Bryant (1985) said that children who had learned nursery rhymes pre-school were better readers at six.

Elliott (1992) showed that all types of parents can help at home in a study of parents using different ways of helping like paired reading, reading stories and hearing reading from scheme books. However, middle class children had a superior understanding of the functions of print and of stories, and middle class families hearing children read was characterised by emphasis on enhancing comprehension and stimulating a child's interest. Middle class parents seemed more aware of using the context, structure, semantic and syntactic clues and phonic prompts and explained these to children in relation to different words. They made sure that children were aware of all the useful strategies to help them to read effectively.

Regarding the question of parents helping in the past, concern had been expressed by teachers about parents pressuring or confusing children; The Bullock report, (DES, 1975) referred to possible misguided or harmful practices, teachers in Cuckle and Hannon's (1985) study mentioned the possibility of parents confusing or teaching children to read "parrot fashion", teachers in Tizard et al's (1988) study mentioned the danger of pressure and confusions between lower and upper case letters, and teachers in Hannon and James (1990) study did likewise. However, teachers may not now be so wary. Hannon et al (1989) state that hearing children read school books is the most common approach encouraged by teachers in helping children. They described in detail what strategies parents used to help children when hearing children read (HCR). They devised 22 categories from extensive tape recordings and showed that parents are competent helpers, and are very similar to teachers in the strategies they use.

Parents have been advised to read to children both pre-school (Bullock report DES, 1975) and by teachers once they have started school (Cuckle, 1981) as a way of helping reading development. The possible benefits to reading development outlined by Teale (1984) were discussed in the previous section.

Implications for the present study

Schools involve parents in helping with reading, often using books provided by school. While there have been studies on how and why parents help if children have difficulties (e.g. with PR and PPP) there are less details of parents helping when children have no particular difficulties as will be the case in the present study.

Hannon et al (1989) in their studies of HCR say that "if the descriptive system was to be a meaningful one some inferences would have to be made about the intended functions of moves made by teachers and parents". In that study the researchers speculated about adults' intentions, and generally children are not asked about how they perceive the help that is offered to them. The intention of the present study is to investigate these issues.

If as a previous section shows, parents are already providing a literacy curriculum at home, the question arises as to how this is affected when children start school and the parents become involved by the school. Books being sent home by school constitute an intervention and this may cause changes in what is already happening at home. What is the role of hearing children read (HCR), does HCR occur naturally or is the practice instigated by school; if the latter is the case, does it displace or is it additional what occurs at home? Do separate "home" and "parental involvement" curricula operate side by side or do they merge in some way?

The questions of the relationship between what home and school provide and the impact on the child are largely

unexplored and these questions are investigated in the present study.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The type of methodology needed

While a quantitative survey can give a very useful overview of a particular area, the present study needed the kind of detail that only a more ethnographical approach can supply. The method would not be purely ethnographical - the researcher did not intend to become a participant or to amass extensive, detailed field notes in a natural situation without intervention as Patton (1980) did in his ethnographical research. However, the study was to come within that general type of approach which relies on detailed study of a necessarily small number of individuals.

To collect data on beliefs, practices and underlying principles about reading development a semi-structured in-depth interview with a supporting checklist to give background data was considered appropriate; questions were designed such that beliefs could be inferred. This method was considered more manageable given the limits on time and less intrusive than participant observation. Also, observation (although it cannot capture everything) was considered essential as it was important to know what participants actually do as well as what they think or say they do. The data from interviews, checklists and observations could be linked together to form case studies centred round a child and his or her parents and teacher; as the data to be collected was to be very detailed, participants would have to be limited to a small number.

Suitable qualitative data can be collected and analyzed in a number of ways. Grounded theory was described by Glaser and Strauss, (1968) as being concerned with discovering theory, hypotheses and concepts from data systematically obtained and analyzed in the course of research; appropriate categories are discovered by examination of the

data. This method was expected to prove useful in the preliminary studies, but it was recognised that a way to compare home and school curricula would be needed so Lawton's (1978) model was to be adapted and used as appropriate. It was expected to provide a comparative tool and a framework for questions to be asked.

Further details of the methods and procedures used will be found in the main study methodology section.

Devising the questions - an indirect approach

Pajares (1992) states that teachers' beliefs are very important in research; this work suggests that definitions must be very precise to elicit statements about beliefs. The work of Whitaker and Moses (1988) concerning teachers' understanding of learning theory and its relationship to practice indicated that it might be difficult to draw out from teachers and parents accounts of their beliefs and underlying theories about reading development. Lawton (1978) suggested that teachers often avoid "theory", although curriculum planning must involve some underlying assumptions.

There appeared to be difficulty in eliciting information about teachers' beliefs. Parents' beliefs were to be compared and it was assumed that they would find it even less easy than teachers to describe beliefs about the technicalities of reading development and curricula. Therefore, an indirect approach that asked about practices, reasons for practices and thoughts about current experiences from which beliefs could be inferred seemed a worthwhile approach to take.

Duffy and Anderson (1982) in their work concerning teachers' thinking with regard to literacy offered a basis for studying belief systems, implicit theories and their relationship to practices in teaching reading in a way considered appropriate to the participants of the present study. Briefly, teachers' answers to questions concerning pupil organisation, time and material and word recognition

cues enabled the researchers to categorise teachers according to the type of theories to which they subscribed. The work influenced the construction of questions and the use of the checklist as a basis for the interview used in the present work; a summary (too lengthy to include here but which may be of interest to researchers) is in Appendix 1.

Selecting important aspects of reading development as a focus

Literacy curricula will consist of a great many aspects and activities and in order to examine curriculum planning and delivery in depth a few tasks would have to be selected as a particular focus. As discussed in a previous section, hearing children read (and necessarily help given with word identification) and adults reading to children seemed suitable as foci as they are widespread activities common to both home and school and are often recommended by schools when parents are involved in schemes to help with reading.

Definitions

A number of terms are used when talking about literacy practices; for the purposes of this study three terms are defined as follows:

Task - a unit of work undertaken

Skills - Any procedure used by the child (e.g. recognising whole words or spelling patterns, sounding, considering the picture, context or general meaning) to identify a word

Identify - say an individual written word aloud

Validity of the data

With the particular type of qualitative data to be collected and the resulting descriptions, which involve inference and interpretation, there arises the question of validity. If evidence of a particular type is drawn from a single statement then that evidence can be considered weak. For it to be stronger, several statements need to indicate and corroborate a particular interpretation. This is one

way of validating data within itself. It can also be validated externally by the participant who provided the data or by an outside party who can compare descriptions with raw data. The procedures for ensuring validity will be discussed at greater length in the main study methodology.

In the light of the above considerations exploratory preliminary studies were carried out and from them the methodology for the main study was developed. The preliminary studies are described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE THE PRELIMINARY STUDIES

AIM AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDIES

The aim of the preliminary studies was three-fold; to investigate the kind of literacy activities that children engage in at home and school, to test the feasibility of collecting detailed data from a small sample of parents, teachers and children and to develop tools to use to study the interactions between parents, teachers and children learning to read, in preparation for a more detailed study.

The studies developed in such a way as to contribute to the aims, research design, methodology and research tools for the main study. Four studies will be described involving their respective methods, collection and analysis of data, conclusions and rationale for the next stage. All interviews were recorded and transcribed in full.

STUDY 1 - CHILDREN'S WRITING AT HOME

Aim

The selected interest was in the child's literacy experiences at home, particularly their writing. The aim was to find a way to investigate a particular literacy practice in order to probe the nature of the home curriculum experience. For this purpose a sample was selected from homes where, in the light of the literature review, a wide range of literacy practices might be expected.

Method

The method was to invite children and parents to bring or send in anything written by the child which had not been directly influenced by the school. Three class teachers of 6, 7 and 8 year olds agreed to send home a letter of invitation; a list of suggestions of possible material was included so that participants could feel sure that a wide range of material would be acceptable (see letter in

Appendix 2).

Result

Parents and children (aged 5 to 9) proved generous and a variety of material was sent. This included stories with a picture and caption on each page, a recipe for an imaginary dish, a menu for a play-cafe, two chapters of an autobiographical novel, a floor plan with notes for a proposed extension and a drawing of a domestic scene with parts labelled; all had been produced on the child's initiative without adult help.

Conclusion

The variety of the writing led to the conclusion that "middle class" children do engage in sophisticated literacy activities at home, and questions arose as to how other literacy experiences which occur at home might be investigated. It was important that the views of children be sought, as it was felt that they are often neglected in educational or psychological research. Parents were also to be consulted on the actual practices which yield a child's literacy behaviour. Lengthy notes by the parents on the context in which interesting or unusual writing had taken place indicated a few parents who might be likely collaborators to approach for piloting an interview on literacy practices at home.

Further study

A few parents were approached and asked to talk, with their children, about literacy practices at home.

STUDY 2 - INTERVIEWING PARENTS AND CHILDREN AT HOME

Aim

The aim was to devise a means of investigating literacy practices at home to include both parents and children.

Method

Three parents agreed to be interviewed with their children.

An interview schedule was devised based on experience of what happens in the home, the literature on children reading aloud and what was demonstrated by the samples of writing collected. One pair of parent and child was used to try the very preliminary interview (see Appendix 3, their data is not further discussed) and this experience led to a shorter version of the interview (see Appendix 4). This was used with two other parents and children who were interviewed twice, the second time allowing time for reflection for both interviewer and interviewee and time to prepare further questions to clarify points in the first interview. At the second interview parents were given a transcript of the first interview and asked if they remembered what they had said and asked if they would clarify or expand on a few points.

Adult's interview

This was based on knowledge gained from writing that was collected earlier, from experience in classrooms and homes and on common practices mentioned in the literature (reading aloud, being read to and help with spelling). Questions covered motivation for reading and writing at home, choice and source of books and activities in which parents and children engage (see Appendix 4).

Analyzing the parents' data

The transcripts were read through twice and several points emerged; these could be categorised under a number of headings as follows:

- 1) Distinctions between reading initiated by school and home
- 2) The role of the parent in promoting literacy
- 3) The role of motivation
- 4) Attitudes to different types of books
- 5) Individual differences in children
- 6) Encouraging specific reading and writing skills

These headings were derived from inspection of the data, in

line with grounded theory analysis. No attempt was made at this stage to use a curriculum model. Statements were grouped together under the above headings to form a description of literacy activities at home and parent's attitudes. Descriptions of how the data were used to make inferences about two parents follow.

Results of parent's interviews

Mother of Greg (6) and Erica (9)

There seems to be a divide between helping with school work at home and encouraging literacy skills in the children's free time at home. For instance, mother will listen to reading when Greg (6) brings a book home (as directed by the teacher) and helps him with hard words by telling them;

"Well, if he's chosen something too hard I'll tell him the hard words."

She also tries to get him to concentrate on keeping his eye on the text, so as to speed up his reading and get more enjoyment from the book, whether the book is from school or a more suitable one specifically for practising reading that she selects from home;

"I'm trying to get him to handle whole chunks of text. He has to keep at it, and that's a long process because he's quite slow."

The mother considers it reasonable to take on this teaching role as the teacher has a large class, and limited opportunity to hearing reading;

"... he gets people listen to him read a couple of times a week ... with 29 how can you cope with the individual differences?"

She may ask Greg to read from a book they have at home, to supplement a school book that she considers unsuitable at this stage;

" ... his eye doesn't go to the print ... I think there's a definite disadvantage at this stage in having pictures that are that entertaining still - so I pick "Frog and Toad" because there is a whole page of print."

So mother will help Greg to read books sent from school and teaches skills she thinks are important. However, she does not consider that she spends much time practising with

Greg;

"I don't practice much with him ... it's the second child thing, there isn't the time."

She doesn't intervene to get more suitable books sent home, preferring to leave the choice to the child;

"Well you can't really, (intervene) because they do it (choose) in school when you're not in the classroom. I've said 'choose one from level 5' ... I could go to the teacher and ask for an appropriate book to be brought home ... but I think they like them to have a free choice."

But she doesn't actively encourage her son to spend his free time reading although Greg does express positive views about the advantage of being able to read later;

" ... he said 'when I can read by myself I'll be able to read as long as I like, won't I?' I said 'yes', but he doesn't seem to be in much of a hurry".

The mother does not seem to capitalise on this enthusiasm by exerting pressure, even though she is a person who values literacy highly and wishes the children were more interested in developing their literacy skills. Speaking now of Erica, (9) she says:

"I mean, I wish she would (write more) because I think reading and writing are very important for me"

Erica is of course competent in literacy and practices a number of skills either voluntarily or at school; her mother is highly appreciative of her efforts;

"She'd brought some science work home that she'd done very well, explained clearly with very nice sentence structure ... I thought the factual science writing was very good for her"

and Erica does write stories occasionally from choice;

"On a couple of occasions she has just done it - something has just made her want to write a story"

Erica (9) enjoys reading to herself at bedtime and her mother approves of this;

"I quite like her to read to herself ... She's quite keen on some of the series like 'Ann of Green Gables' and 'A little house in the woods'."

Her reasons for not putting pressure on her children to read and write more are to do with both wanting the motivation to come from them (as only this way will it have value for them) and not wishing to disturb their confidence in themselves, particularly in Erica's case;

"... she wouldn't be doing it (writing) because she wanted to, she'd be doing it because I was standing over her ... I think it's important that she keeps her confidence in what she does like doing"

"I don't want her to feel there's something she ought to be doing better than she is ... because her confidence is too important"

The mother does not see Erica as an academic child, and does not mention that literacy skills have emerged naturally as part of everyday life, rather she suggests that reading and writing are a bit of a chore and not Erica's first choice when it comes to expressing herself;

"... writing's not her medium ... she won't go and read and write on her own ... she's not very keen on solitary activities and reading is necessarily a solitary activity"

The mother is happy for the children to develop their own interests;

"They are children who play and watch television"

"She's usually busy, she often picks up her recorder and plays ... she's quite skilful on the recorder... and she plays with her brother."

"She's keen on being with her friends - she'd rather do that than anything."

Of course, now that Erica is nearly ten, her mother acknowledges that Erica naturally will want to develop beyond the watchful eye of a mother,

"... you can't know everything they do - not at ten. I'm not the expert any more, on what she does."

and Erica may well do more reading and writing than her mother knows of.

The family is one in which literacy is valued (the mother is a writer, both parents lecture in higher education and

there are books in the house.)

"They have so many here (books) we don't seem to borrow from the library"

and

"The loo's full of books ... Greg locks himself in ... reading or looking at pictures"

"Greg is the world expert on Lego catalogues"

The children have many opportunities for practising their literacy skills including access to a typewriter and computer,

"I'd like them to use the word processor eventually"

The mother has a broad view of what literacy is - as well as those conventional reading and writing activities mentioned, Greg reading or looking at Lego catalogues is regarded as a literacy activity as well as his perusal of non-fiction books;

" ... he probably makes up stories to himself about what people in the information books are doing too ... "

"Greg is keyed into the visual images and spends ages reading those - his eye doesn't go to the print ... "

She will help him read a non-fiction book on a particular topic of interest if the book is too difficult for Greg's reading abilities;

" ... it usually needs digesting for him, that kind of book ..."

Although there are opportunities at home for literacy activities, the mother doesn't see her children as very interested in literacy;

"My idea of a child who writes a lot is one who writes a diary or often writes stories. And that's usually a child who's a book lover and reads a lot. And my two aren't."

Conclusion

In summary, in this family there are a number of literacy practices going on and the mother appreciates school work brought home; she provides materials for reading and writing, will help with writing e.g. give spellings if

asked. She adds her own teaching to the activities particularly in the case of Greg's early reading. She prefers to let the children choose reading and writing if they wish, rather than pressuring them for fear of destroying confidence in what they do well, and does not want them to feel they should do more if they do not choose.

Mother of Sally (5) and Lisa (2)

In contrast is Stella, the mother of Sally (5) and Lisa (2). Like the first mother she values literacy;

" She has always liked books and I hope she always will"

and says that both children, particularly Sally, have a long-established interest in literacy;

"They enjoy books. It's not usually just one, it's a stack of them. They start at the top of the pile and don't stop til they get to the bottom."

"Sally has always shown an interest from when she was very small ... and because she has shown an interest I've picked up on that, rather than made her do it."

She does not pressure her younger daughter, Lisa, to read books or interest herself in literacy, preferring her to become interested in her own time;

"Lisa is asking 'what does it say there?' but not so much as Sally used to."

"Lisa is catching onto this (the same interest in literacy as Sally has) now. Up til now she's been too fidgety to concentrate - but now she is beginning to want stories. She'll say 'Read me a story mummy' and she'll listen from start to finish."

Sally an early reader, reads books sent home from school and says;

"Sometimes I can read all of them and some books I can read just a bit"

Apart from books, Sally shows an interest in other written material;

"She's forever asking about what things say - for instance on packets in supermarkets"

and attempts to read a wide variety of materials and styles of print;

" ... advertising boards - anything, even sides of vans, she will try to read it ... shop signs - anything"

Apart from an interest in reading, Sally enjoys writing and is developing skills fast. At five, she is already used to writing letters, cards, shopping lists, can write her friends' names, writes crosswords and deliberately practices spelling using magnetic letters;

" ... she'll ask 'is that how you spell it?' ... she experiments with new words to see if she can work out how to spell it ..."

Sally also makes books - sometimes with a separate picture and caption on each page and sometimes a continuous story 3 or 4 pages long. At this stage, Stella says;

"The pictures would do more explaining than the words"

Lisa is developing an interest in books and memorises the words after one reading;

"She can read it (the story) back to you from memory ... I suppose they learn to recognise the words through that"

and is beginning to write, albeit in scribbles which her mother recognises as early writing skills;

"She (Lisa) scribbles and says 'it says so and so' - no letters that make any sense but to her ... she scribbles on paper and to her it's something very clear"

This seems a very enlightened view of literacy; experience suggests some teachers and parents regard such activities as Lisa's as worthless scribbling and reading "parrot fashion". It is suggestive of a view of literacy as emergent within meaningful practices, rather than literacy as a technical decoding skill.

Stella helps Sally with spelling and obviously has a very clear understanding of developing writing; in fact teaches Sally incidentally when the child asks for certain words - but does not put pressure on her to read or write.

Speaking of Sally reading aloud she uses a number of strategies to help;

"Usually we listen, but if she gets stuck we don't actually read the word, we start trying to get the sounds, the first sounds and if that doesn't help a few more sounds and then she can usually do the last bit herself ... if they are long and difficult words I usually tell her ... and if the word comes up again she remembers what it is."

With writing the mother employs a number of strategies (from providing writing to copy to grouping letters in spelling patterns. Sally writes what words she can, otherwise she will ask how to spell it when involved in any of her writing activities.

She may copy something written by her mother (for instance for a birthday card)

"Well first mummy would write something on a piece of paper then I would copy it"

but mother will also spell it verbally (for other writing activities)

"I would spell it - usually just the once - if it's a long word we might do it in parts ... I don't do it letter by letter, I do three or four letters together."

She would try to give the idea of spelling patterns

" ... instead of odd letters ... "

In summary, here is a mother whose children have shown a very early interest in all kinds of print and the wish to learn and enjoy literacy skills. The mother has capitalised on this interest and encourages the development of skills based on the current interests of the child without putting pressure on them. She has considerable insight into reading development and appropriate teaching skills for different stages.

The teaching activities are all carried out in an incidental, almost unconscious way; both mothers discussed believe themselves to be allowing their children to develop literacy (and other) skills at their own rate and according to their inclinations and both apparently feel comfortable

with the situation.

Erica's and Greg's mother never mentioned that either child showed the early passion for print that both Sally and Lisa felt though she does mention the early years;

" I don't think she ever got very self reliant because when she was small, before Greg was born, I never left her on her own. I would always interfere - at least that my story."

She never mentions that her "interfering " included reading books either at her instigation or at Erica's. Sally's mother said that she picked up on an interest that Sally showed; it would, therefore, seem that the child would need to show an interest in books (presumably provided by the mother) from which the mother would proceed, rather than the mother deliberately presenting books with a view to actually generating the beginning of literacy skills. A parent interested in promoting literacy might present children with books and other printed material as first an enjoyable and second a valuable (as far as pre-reading skills are concerned) activity and capitalise on the interest they show, watching out for opportunities to promote their interests in literacy.

Conclusions

There were some interesting data from the participants concerning the amount of encouragement children were given at a very early age, and the amount of pressure a parent is prepared to apply in helping the child. Of importance was the role that the school played in providing books and direction for reading at home. These findings suggested important themes for the main study and the study enabled the researcher to develop techniques of drawing inferences from the data.

Children's interview

An insight into the child's point of view and feelings about becoming literate was of the greatest importance in this study. However, data from children promised to be difficult to collect; for this reason the difficulties of

collecting data are discussed at some length.

Although some children can be very articulate, most children are more often "doers" rather than "talkers" and can be unresponsive, especially when asked about fairly abstract matters. How to find a way to engage the child's interest and attention in such a way as to probe his or her thoughts and access information is a problem. The first idea was to devise a task somehow based on literacy activity which would achieve this. One parent had suggested that her son of six did not understand the term "information book", though it had been observed with much younger children that they could very easily distinguish between information, poetry and story books (presumably by the format of the books). This prompted the idea of using different types of books as the focus of attention for an interview to get to know children's thoughts on the role of parent and teacher and their ideas about whether they considered themselves readers by engaging them in a "doing" activity rather than a purely talking one. So a box of books was selected with an interest range of about 3 to 9 including unusual ones so that children would not recognise them too easily. The books included nursery rhymes, poetry, picture story books, books with more text and less pictures suitable for children of 8+, non-fiction books of various types and an atlas. Sally and Greg (aged 5 and 6 and both fairly competent readers) were asked to do the task of sorting the books out into piles of different types for example, story books for themselves, stories for younger or older brother or sister and information books that explained things but did not have a story. As they did this, they were asked why a book was allocated as it was, how did they recognise it, what age it was suitable for, whether they would like it, whether the parent or teacher would like it, whether they could read it or would have it read to them, how parent and teacher helped with reading, who helped most, where and when they liked to read and why they wanted to read.

Analysis of children's data

The children's data was analyzed under a number of headings as follows:

- 1) How children classified books
- 2) Which books they would like to read
- 3) Which books their teachers and parents would like them to read
- 4) Who they prefer to read with
- 5) How they like to be helped
- 6) When they like to read
- 7) Why they want to learn to read

Results of children's interviews

In true "doing" style both children enjoyed the task and were very competent at carrying it out including giving a suitable age at which a child would enjoy the books, but when it came to answering the more theoretical questions about reading and books in general and about when and where they liked to read they tended to become vague.

Greg (6) said he liked the stories and the non-fiction books, but did not know which his parents or teacher would like him to read. He said he liked to be told hard words when reading aloud, and liked reading through graded books at school but said he thought he should do a bit of reading at home so that he would become a better reader. He said he was allowed to bring school books home, and said he liked them. He also said being able to read was important for the pleasure and information to be gained not only now, but for the future. He was well aware that as an adult he would need to read, if only to get basic information from signs and products he might buy.

Sally (5) said she liked story books best but did not know what her teacher or parents would like her to read. She liked to read with her mother at home and liked it best when her mother helped her to sound the difficult words. She said she wanted to be a good reader when she grew up, so that she could have a job.

Conclusion

The children enjoyed reading on the whole, and did not express any strong preference for reading at home or at school.

The book sorting activity was an enjoyable task and a lot emerged about the child's knowledge of books and it demonstrated that engaging the child in a relevant task is a good approach to asking questions. However, this particular task did not yield all the information that was required about different experiences and it would be necessary to find a similarly absorbing task that could stimulate relevant questions and answers.

Further studies

The question of the child having different experiences from school and home became central to the research, and contrasting the two was essential. It seemed important to investigate the school's view about reading at home and to consider the child's experience at school. In view of this, the teachers of Greg and Sally were approached and asked to participate in observation in the classroom and an interview. Sally's teacher was not able to take part and Greg's teacher agreed to an observation session but not to an interview. Observations in Greg's classroom are described in the next section.

STUDY 3 - OBSERVATION IN THE CLASSROOM

Method

Observations took place on a typical morning devoted to a variety of literacy activities. Rather than sampling activities at regular intervals or noting the incidence of a particular type of activity, it was decided to move frequently from group to group making brief notes. This method seemed suitable for the purpose which was to note as many details of activities as possible in the classroom and to get an idea of the teacher's general approach to

literacy learning as a whole, and to find out if there were any directions given about reading at home.

Results

The classroom setting

Sylvia was a very experienced teacher who had been in the school for about 15 years and had a class of 29 children of 6+ (Year 1). The first hour of the morning was taken up with reading and writing activities namely writing well-known stories with an emphasis on using novel opening and joining phrases, describing a visit to a fish and chip shop, writing a prayer in thanks for food, and a written work sheet concerned with how the face expresses emotions. This work was continued after assembly with more general activities and the last half hour of the morning was taken up with a music lesson.

Analysis of data

The notes were examined to pick out different activities. Each practice may have taken place more than once with different children. The observations were divided into categories according to whether the child participated alone or with the teacher with or without some teacher help; these categories are based on the activity from the child's point of view, rather than to the activities themselves. The following categories emerged:

Child directed practices

Child reads a book without adult help.

Child reads his/her own text to remind self of what s/he has written and adds next words.

Child writes an amount of text independently without stopping to ask for spellings, to look anything up and without obviously stopping to remind self of where s/he is up to.

Child suggests spelling correction to another child or corrects own work.

Child copies caption or word on worksheet incorporating it into his/her work.

Child finds word in dictionary/card and writes it into own text.

Child asks teacher to confirm spelling - teacher complies.

Child cooperates with teacher - usually a teacher directed activity when child seeks help

Child/Teacher take turns reading an instruction on work sheet - teacher reads those words that the child obviously is not able to read.

Teacher reads, child repeats reading where child needs to understand an instruction; child then continues work.

Child sounds out word with teacher's help to understand instruction; child continues work.

Child asks how to complete word, teacher prompts child for next sound and child writes word.

Child complains she does not know what to do next; teacher asks child to read next sentence on work sheet - child complies and continues work.

Teacher notices a child is having trouble with spelling so cannot continue work. Teacher points out a written word or phrase somewhere in the classroom for child to copy - child complies and continues work.

Child asks for word to be spelt in his/her dictionary; cannot attempt it so teacher sounds it out as she writes and child continues word by copying the word.

Child brings work to show teacher, teacher points out a mistake, asks child to suggest what sound is missing, child complies and corrects word.

Teacher reads phrases to start off story for set work. Asks individual children to read same card - children comply.

Music lesson - teacher reads words of song pointing to words as she does so; asks children to repeat them from memory.

Adult directed activity - apparently no response from children expected

Teacher reads cards to group containing words or phrases to be included in story - apparently expects no response apart from children's attention

Curate reads story in assembly - no particular response apparently expected but the odd laugh clearly appreciated.

Teachers's views on reading

Sylvia described her views on teaching literacy in the

course of the observations; she is very interested in reading and writing development and her aim is to teach with material based on the children's interests as much as possible. She sees reading activities and opportunities for teaching skills as falling into three main areas as follows;

Using reading schemes

Schemes are used to practice reading skills learned in other activities and to keep a check on reading progress. Stella combines three reading schemes and allows the children free choice within an appropriate level of difficulty; books are read to the teacher or another adult twice a week in class. A scheme book (or otherwise) is chosen daily to be read at home. This book may be read by, with or to a parent according to its level of difficulty, as indicated on a card inside the book. The way in which the child is helped when reading to the parent is left to the parent's discretion. Notebooks contain parent's, children's and teacher's comments as the main way of communicating on a regular basis. Parents are free to discuss reading progress at any time with the teacher.

An assistant in the classroom was observed preparing "book bags" for home use. Children selected books either from the scheme or not (some with considerable thought and care) when they arrived in the classroom; in some cases the teacher had a short discussion about the selection with a child and the book and comment book were left with the assistant who noted the title in the comment book. There was no indication that comments were read at this time.

Project work

Projects have a strong practical bias eg. making a model village, creating a fish and chip shop, making a real frog garden and the projects are used for language work eg. various labels are attached to models and books are made and used as class readers in a number of ways. The teacher would always try to gear projects to what children find

interesting and is willing to adapt projects as unexpected interests arise.

The classroom reflects a very lively, imaginative and creative teacher and teaching style; there is work from two or three projects displayed, children were seen to stop and inspect the materials from a project and play briefly with them and to read the labels from them.

Specific reading and writing activities

The teacher sets specific reading and writing tasks and tries to use occasions that arise from the work to prompt children to read and spell independently; in this way she is using material that is interesting and relevant to the children to promote learning and the literacy activity that takes place then "comes from them" (in her words).

Sylvia takes every opportunity to link the spoken and written word and use it as a teaching point; this happens frequently and consistently in the classroom in an apparently unconscious way typical of a very experienced teacher.

Sylvia's comments on the observational notes

The analysis of the classroom observations was given to Sylvia for validation and discussion. She was pleased to see that some children were working very independently and in some cases helping each other with work, unnoticed by her in the "whirl of the morning's activities". She was surprised to see how many literacy events had occurred and how often she was called upon for help, consistent with the impression that many of her teaching strategies are unconscious. She thought that the observations and comments reflected what she was trying to achieve.

The experiences Sylvia presents to Greg

The children are constantly being expected to expand their proficiency in reading and writing e.g. by spelling and reading new words, by relating patterns of spoken and

written language and by referring to written material in the environment, often with the teachers help and encouragement. The teacher does not pressure children, but recognises when a child needs more help and constantly adapts her teaching to the child's perceived ability and stage of development.

Possible implications for Greg

The approaches of his teacher and his mother to Greg's developing literacy skills in terms of the similarity of their demands and strategies for helping can be considered.

Identifying unknown words

Greg's mother uses some of the same reading materials as his teacher (the reading scheme books) to practice reading by hearing Greg read; she says she helps with difficult words by telling them to Greg. We do not know how Sylvia or her helper hear Greg read, but we do know that when children in the class have difficulty with reading some of the words in the set reading and writing tasks, then Sylvia will help with difficult words by reading them for the child. Therefore, both mother and teacher employ similar strategies for reading difficult words, at times. Often, however, Sylvia prompts the child to sound and build a word and Greg's mother does not mention that she does this.

Materials

Sylvia uses materials other than reading scheme books to teach skills, namely practical materials from project work and set tasks such as various work sheets, story writing sometimes with written prompts and class readers based on project work. She uses these both systematically on a regular basis (the observed morning's activities being part of her teaching routine) and when the occasion for teaching a particular point arises in the course of her regular work. Greg's mother also uses materials other than the reading scheme sent by the school, but the material is largely limited to published books she judges more suitable to Greg's level of ability and to non-fiction books based

on the child's interests.

Other reading skills to meet individual needs

Greg's mother uses the books to teach specific skills she judges are important at this stage e.g. to teach Greg to keep his eye on the text so to read more fluently. She uses the non-fiction books to help Greg access relevant information and will read some of it for him if necessary; she refers to this as digesting the text. Although she may spend time on such teaching, Sylvia was not observed doing so in the classroom; as Greg's mother pointed out, possibly the parent has the advantage over the teacher in having the time and the opportunity to give the necessary individual attention.

Creating reading opportunities

The observations show that the teacher puts a tremendous amount of energy into using opportunities that arise in the classroom to prompt more learning, creating a routine of learning with the expectation that the child will accept it. The mother at home does not create situations or especially encourage Greg to develop reading and writing. She prefers to have a clear divide between her role as home helper to the teacher (with prescribed tasks and some supplementary tasks where she sees a place for providing individual attention) and her parental role of letting the child develop naturally. She feels that to go beyond those bounds she sets herself would be to put undesirable pressure on the child which might be destructive to self-confidence. If the child had shown more interest in literacy at an early age, if he had always asked about books and print and spelling words, then the mother may have felt differently about encouraging him more to spend his free time in literacy pursuits without feeling that she was exerting undesirable pressure.

The child's interpretation of the home/school relationship

Greg may interpret the differences between home and school in a number of different ways;

- 1) He may not notice that parent and teacher make different demands.
- 2) He may be aware of and confused by the two different sets of expectations, although he did not indicate such feelings when questioned.
- 3) He may accept that there is a clear divide between home and school, perceive no conflict and be perfectly able to adapt himself to the different demands. This seems likely as he is aware that there is a place for reading at home and at school.

Conclusion

The observations were very useful in highlighting activities in the classroom which could be asked about in a further study. Some of these are at the core of the curriculum, for example reading aloud to an adult, spelling independently and being helped to read unknown words in different ways.

It was clear that Greg was having two sets of experiences at home and school and it was important to investigate these in terms of similarities and differences. It was also important to look at the child in terms of what s/he thinks and feels and as the children had already indicated, they can answer questions if their interest is engaged.

Further study

An obvious way to proceed would be to study systematically a group of willing child/parent/teacher, asking similar questions and making similar observations of the adults and studying the child in relation to these questions; so the idea of a "triad" was formed which is described in the next study.

STUDY 4 - HOME AND SCHOOL EXPERIENCES WITH TRIADS OF CHILD, PARENT AND TEACHER

Method

Two teachers who had a particular interest in language development were recruited and they were asked to nominate two children whose parents they thought would be interested in participating. As the parents in the earlier study had been from professional families, two working-class families were chosen with the idea that they might have different views to express. Both parents and children were to be interviewed and children were to be recorded during reading sessions.

The participants

Janice was an experienced infant teacher, and nominated Martin (6) and his parents. The mother, Clarrie, agreed to take part; Janice was glad of the opportunity to focus on Martin as she wished to understand this child better.

Jill had recently come to primary from secondary teaching and was keen to learn all she could about literacy. She nominated Lindsey (5) and her parents and the mother, Cathy, agree to take part. The parents were approached by letter and two interviews were arranged with them and their children. In both cases, although the fathers were not interviewed they both came home during the interviews and listened and occasionally made comments.

The adult interview

A series of questions was devised asking adults about reading aloud, materials used and organisation, the child's progress, the development of writing, about parental help and about how they think literacy develops. The children were present at the home interview and were asked to give their view or add to what the parents said. The interview schedules (Appendices 5 and 6) had their roots either in common literacy practices or were connected to points that had arisen in earlier interviews.

Results

Analysis of data

The interviews were recorded and the tapes transcribed in full, transcription taking at least four times the recording time, as Patton (80) suggests. The transcripts were examined and there were some interesting data; but it was clear that the framework for analysis in Study 2 (based on deriving categories from the data) was not sufficient. The idea of two separate curricula being presented to the child had emerged and the question of the child transferring from one to the other was already central to the study. An attempt was made to link the available data with the adaptation of Lawton's model outlined in Chapter 1. Regarding the practical aspects of the analysis, categories were drawn up based on the model and the data was organised under category headings linked to philosophical, psychological, social and practical aspects, and the different roles of home and school. An attempt was made to use Patton's (80) method of arranging data, that is copying the transcripts, marking them according to different categories and cutting it up and ordering it physically into groups. This method was used but only with a great deal of time and ensuing chaos as it was difficult to interpret remarks outside the context. With the second transcript headings were made separately as the transcript was read through and a category heading suggested itself. Remarks were numbered and noted under the headings. The children's interviews were transcribed and remarks added which supported the adult data. The data is presented in the following sections and is related to an adaptation of Lawton's model; home and school curricula are compared.

The school curriculum.

Beliefs about literacy would include the value of literacy in general and for individuals in particular, knowledge of the development of the reading and writing process and knowledge of the use of different teaching materials. Also included would be general views about the place of school and home in education, beliefs about parents as teachers

and the home as a suitable environment for learning. The data demonstrates these points in a number of ways.

Beliefs about literacy

Martin's teacher's general philosophy about becoming literate is reflected in the fact that she takes it for granted that reading is readily available to anyone, that Martin will learn to read in time, and that the parents have a role to play in achieving this;

"Certainly with Martin's parents I feel it's a question of them having confidence in him being able to carry these things through. That he will be expected to get out there and do it and, you know, learn to read. And I think they do support him a lot..."

There is no mystique attached to reading, it is an extension of everyday life and experience:

"But I see myself as facilitating what they already know. That is what ideally I like to think of myself as doing."

As well as a general philosophy about the place of reading, she has views on how this relates to the average child of a given age:

"And then I get bound up with what do I expect from an average five year old in school - my expectations of a particular group of children are that they come into school and they should like to look at books, that they should get a lot out of books."

and uses this knowledge to plan an appropriate reading curriculum:

"Sharing books within a group of no more than three or four ... has been a very valuable exercise..."

Lindsey (5) is a year younger than Martin (6). Her teacher, Jill, also holds the view that reading is without mystique, that in the early stages reading is equated with using and enjoying books, an activity within everyone's reach. She thinks it is important for the child to feel like a reader, to be in the right frame of mind:

"... they are certainly free to sit and look at books and often do. And they often pretend to read to each other, I feel this is valuable... they are thinking of themselves as a reader. It

helps them to become a reader."

The parents also have a role in conveying the right mood:

"I ask them to help - I don't give any detailed instructions at all... Get them into the right mood about reading."

These views are taken into account when planning the reading curriculum, she obviously plans times when children can indulge in books freely. She also plans more specific tasks:

"So I read it through with them and then they read it to me. And if they can't quite remember - my immediate thing is to say 'let's look at the picture and see what's happening...'"

The curriculum is based on her implied belief that reading involves understanding and enjoying text, that identifying words and decoding skills come later as appropriate:

"...if it's a sound we've done a bit of work on ... with Lindsey I think she's ready to have something pointed out to her - 'Look, that word begins with the same letter and it sounds the same.' "

Social influences

The national curriculum and the assessments arising from it can be regarded as sociological considerations and presumably these will be felt more as time goes on and the national curriculum is fully implemented; how the curriculum might be affected is demonstrated by Janice, Martins's teacher, though what she is doing in this example, as well as making an assessment for a formal record, is assessing individualised reading programme with a view to planning the next step in the curriculum:

"...at that point I'm wanting to hear them read because I want to do a report or an analysis on it or see how they're doing... "

The general ethos of the school or education authority can be considered to make a social demand. In the school being discussed there is a "real books" policy involving appropriate materials and the emphasis on reading for meaning affecting curriculum planning.

On the whole, with these primary school teachers, social

considerations do not seem to have a large part in planning a curriculum except that school and education authorities policies make a demand and the national curriculum imposes both a framework for achievement and assessment; also there is a general social expectation that children will start to become the literate adults of the future. This is implied when teachers talk about children's early literacy and is true for both Martin;

"And I think they do support him a lot... I've tried to say 'This is a pleasurable thing', learning is fun, it doesn't have to be painful... it will happen..."

and for Lindsey;

"She's making quite a good beginning... she's not really a proper reader yet but she's well on the way to becoming one..."

Psychology of participants

Psychological factors seem to have a great influence on the planning of the curriculum by modifying the basic framework. Individual differences in motivation, the rate at which the child learns and his/her particular learning style affect planning and teachers take these factors into account. Martin's teacher is particularly aware of the individual and his needs:

"I suppose I've always worked on the principle that every child is individual, and I've always worked on individual's strategies or weaknesses or strengths. But obviously that's an ideal world and you can't be doing that so there's a lot of areas where you are missing the point for a lot of kids. But at the same time some will pick it up and some will - you know - it will just spin off around the group... they can take it at their own level, they can respond to a set task or an activity to their own level. I wouldn't expect them to respond in the same way."

She takes their responses into account, allows the child to develop at his own pace and there is no suggestion that she would try to force things. She accepts that there may be more relevant things for a child to do at a particular time than read to the teacher:

"For some children at that point, it's (reading a book) not relevant for them to be doing it. They may be in an activity that's more absorbing and

they're involved in."

The observations Janice makes about Martin's progress so far might worry many teachers that Martin was slow and would never read, but Janice accepts his characteristics and plans the curriculum accordingly, allowing Martin to take what he wants and needs from books:

"I'm not sure he has any need of reading... he hasn't really seen the wider picture at all yet... it's like isolated bits he's operating with... Mind you, we got a new book last week from a parent as a class present, Martin really loved it, he actually mentioned something about it looking like another one... that's about as far as we got with that..."

"He does need encouragement to go to books ... he likes to go to the big encyclopedic type of books ... Sometimes I direct it a bit more heavily and say 'can you chose a book to read with a friend or to a friend'... it's usually the friend reading to him rather than him picking up the book first. Somebody will have grabbed him before he's decided what he's going to do ..."

She acknowledges that Martin in particular needs to be lead gently to reading and adapts her methods accordingly:

"Sharing books within a group of no more than three or four plus me ... has been a very valuable exercise in building their confidence in being able to tackle print ... Because for some children who are struggling on their own, the sort of 'gruesome twosome' situation of adult and child is quite a heavy scene. I can assess how the group do together and still pick up on individual strategies the children are using and work on these. Martin does it with a partner, with a friend."

This was certainly the case in a tape recorded session of Martin reading with a friend. It is also worth noting what this teacher's patience and humour contribute to the curriculum, in so far as it seems to help her adapt.

Lindsey's teacher, Jill, takes the same view that in the early stages enjoyment of books is what is most important and is very much against pressure.

"She enjoys looking at books, and is always keen to read to me ... She's not that keen on using pencils as some ... The reading side she's keener on than the writing."

"One thing I say is don't put pressure on your child ... I hate parents pressuring children."

Of course, Jill has no reason to worry about Lindsey's progress as Lindsey is only five and is making good progress towards becoming a proficient reader.

The idea that a child should be self-motivated to read books and that pressure would be harmful especially if applied by the parents at home, and that children have different needs for books and rates of learning are powerful factors in determining how and when books should be presented and therefore how the basic framework for a curriculum is developed.

Practical factors

These practical considerations include the use of limited time, the use of limited materials and the quantity and quality of ancillary help either in school (helpers) or home (parents). Obviously a teacher only has limited time in a day for a class of 30+ children which leaves very little time for individual attention and usually time is short even to give a group some attention. While teachers put great emphasis on individual differences and difficulties and try to accommodate them, they are limited by time and place. Children also have to learn to compromise and accept practical limitations. As Martin's teacher says;

"I found it difficult today for instance, simply because there was a group that had been at the last minute changed, so I was really needed somewhere else at the same time... it's in the normal run of a teacher's day... I was thinking 'Now I want to be with this group and stay with it and build on it' yet there was all this other going on... it's all to do with planning and focusing your attention on one particular thing... I still haven't learned to say 'Right, I'm focusing on this group, you're going to be doing this without my help.' "

Classroom helpers are available but their skills vary; space can be a problem, for instance Lindsey's classroom is so small that all 20 reception class children cannot sit down at a table at the same time so this limits the

activities. They cannot all do a piece of written work or a class reading session at the same time.

Discussing the school curriculum

Considering these factors what do these a school curricula look like? Generally, the teachers value reading and writing for pleasure. The teachers believe literacy will be of value to the child in the short and long term from a practical point of view. Janice believes that the school may not be the best place to teach reading as there is something vaguely 'unnatural' about school as opposed to a smaller family or community group, but nevertheless is prepared to make the best of what school can offer to the children. The teachers also holds views about the optimum method by which to teach reading, based on widely held theoretical views and her own experience and success. There are demands of society and the national curriculum and she places great emphasis on individual differences and rates of learning and motivation of individual pupils. She relies on helpers and parents to further her general aims and all of this within time limits available to individuals.

This adds up to a curriculum that offers many opportunities to learn reading and writing in a number of stages during the period that the child stays in the teacher's class. There will be work on word recognition (memorising words, learning sounds and using context clues) and practising reading in groups or individually with an adult or alone. Reading materials will be published or school made (generated individually or by a small or large group), the emphasis being on meaningful texts ("real books") with perhaps some reading schemes fitted in selectively. Reading and writing practices will range across maths, science, historical or geographical project work as well as creative writing and reading of books for pleasure. There will be limited time allocated to these activities according to the other demands of the timetable. Everyone is expected to read eventually regardless of the amount of help they might need to achieve this goal, and no sanctions will be applied

to anyone seeming reluctant or failing to achieve. The emphasis will be on positive reinforcement, encouragement, stimulation, enjoyment and a striving to find the mixture of material, practical and psychological factors that will lead to success. It is broadly in line with Truda Money's (1988) holistic approach which uses familiar texts to learn reading, with the emphasis on enjoyment and reading for meaning and the building up of what the child brings to school with him/her.

The home curriculum

Martin and Lindsey are both children of manual workers and live in local authority housing; they appear to be prosperous families with many material comforts.

Beliefs about literacy

The same model can be applied to the home curriculum. The philosophical basis will be the parent's ideas, based on knowledge of the reading process, beliefs about the value of literacy, enjoyment of reading for its own sake, but the values may be different to the teacher's, the knowledge different and perhaps more limited. Parents may lack knowledge e.g. methods of teaching reading, purpose of certain practices like re-reading very familiar books and may perhaps lack knowledge of how to motivate and interest children in literacy.

Examples from Martin's mother, Clarrie, demonstrate her beliefs about teaching reading and her knowledge of the reading process. Although Martin's teacher has expressed her confidence in his mother's ability to help Martin at home, Clarrie is not so confident about her own ability to help. She is concerned about identification of words, particularly with her older child; for instance, she is unsure about the role of phonics;

"I still do sounds, I know they don't do that in school, and that's another thing you see, knowing how the school teach - maybe teaching them wrongly..."

And she finds the idea of guessing, presumably using

context cues and pictures, alien and a bit worrying:

"... looking at the picture as a whole then guessing what the word might be... it's something I didn't... expect to do. I've not heard of that... We saw a video... when they introduced the PACT ... a twenty minute thing... I sometimes write their letters, but he doesn't recognise that because it's not the way it's written at school... "

Although she has had a lot of conversations with the teacher about helping in general she has only had a small amount of specific instruction on the more technical details of reading and this is perhaps not enough for her. Here her knowledge is limited. But when the teacher does make a specific suggestion she feels confident to carry it out:

"What I thought we would start - it was in his report - a comment Janice had made about Martin writing his own book to read back - which I'd not actually thought of - cos he is quite slow. We'll actually start that. So I was going to get him to do that - write his own book - just short and simple and perhaps he could read it back."

For her, then, more detailed instructions as well as the more general ones concerning confidence building and encouragement may help the mother. Martin and his brother Lance are not very quick with reading and as yet their mother has not seen much success.

"Martin hasn't really started yet ... and I think they both have difficulty as well."

Lindsey's mother, Cathy, on the other hand seems to be more confident about the school's philosophy of reading and the methods the school expects her to employ. She is happy to go along with it and regards Lindsey's activities as successful reading;

"With a simple book, I can read it to her and she will read it back to me - you know, just from memory and the pictures. She can do that now - I don't know - with her (sister Carla) it just all came together - she just suddenly read words... But Lindsey, she doesn't know words as such, just some individual letters - but reading it back, it shows she knows what's going on, and Lindsey, we'll read a book one week... and she'll refer back to that book... So they're retaining more."

Expressing satisfaction with the school system she says;

"Their idea is you just read, anything you read helps. I try and show interest in reading, like Lindsey will ask me to read the cartoon out of the paper, even if she doesn't understand it. Or she'll say 'Can you read me that' or 'what's that about?'"

"Lindsey's only just gone into Jill's (reception) class - she is interested in books - but it's mainly getting me to read them. I know it all helps - not just books but when you're out shopping, whatever. And she understands about reading from left to right and where words start and end - not all of them do."

Lindsey's mother understands the aims of the school's reading curriculum and supplements it with text she sees all around her. Apart from this basic understanding, she has also experienced success with her children's reading which must have given her confidence in the school's methods. Her older daughter at eight (and the same age as Martin's brother Lance) is an proficient and avid reader and writer (she says of herself that she reads until her "head spins") and Lindsey, in school a year less than Martin, has already made a good start and is probably at the same reading level. Martin's mother, on the other hand, has not yet experienced the same level of success.

Social influences

Social influences do not seem to play a very large part in the home curriculum except that the families have apparently adopted "middle class" literacy values and practices. Parents did not mention the national curriculum nor their children's literacy in relation to a future workforce. Presumably they expect their children to become literate despite any early difficulties they may have in mastering skills, they say nothing to the contrary. Parents do not have the same demands from government and examining bodies that teachers have, and at this stage parents do not mention any concerns about their children passing exams. The parent may share society's concern about the child's literacy as an adult in a different way to the teacher. Martin's mother feels a responsibility and expresses it clearly:

"...it shouldn't be all down to the school - especially when there's 35 to a class - I mean it's impossible to expect anyone to teach that lot."

"... apparently he (Lance) got a grade 1 for reading and still doesn't qualify for extra reading... so I need to do it at home... I was at one time paying for a private tutor for both of them... but they just left... I do find mine need the extra help and if they can't have it at school, then ..."

Particularly in a climate where equal opportunities are taken for granted, there is a feeling that every child deserves the best and the next generation will be better off than the last. This idea has perhaps always been held at a personal or a family level amongst those who have been disadvantaged educationally and socially. One can often hear parents talking about their own childhoods in comparison to those of their children saying "I'll make sure my child doesn't go without." This idea which has a social root, is expressed very clearly and with feeling by Martin's mother:

"I'd like the children to be better at reading than I came out of school. I don't want them to slip through unnoticed. When I was at school that's what happened, you read or you didn't, basically. And I think they both have difficulty as well... I mean I like reading now, I just don't think there was the interest... they taught you the alphabet and the basics and if you didn't read you didn't, basically... I think attitudes have changed as well... I mean, I know my mum... her attitude was as long as you could sign your name for your wages - you know - that's all you need to know... I wish I'd had more... but they didn't think of you as much as an individual... "

Lindsey's mother does not mention anything that reflects such ideas.

Psychology of participants

Perhaps more than anything psychological factors have more importance for parents; rates of learning, individuality, preference and motivation all play an important part in the home curriculum, although parents may not express these in

terms of formal theory.

Motivation and the child's preference for certain activities are taken into consideration by the teachers, as we have seen, and modify the curriculum, at least how and when it is presented; but no teacher suggests that they would leave it to the child entirely to decide whether to read or write. The teacher is in the business of teaching and the child must compromise. As Janice says, reading to her at a particular time may be more convenient for the teacher than the child; while necessary, this may be regrettable as the teacher recognises that motivation enhances learning. But a parent would not normally apply this pressure or insist on an activity at a certain time for her convenience. This affects the delivery of the curriculum in so far as certain activities and help from parents may be available at home, but parents leave it largely to the child to decide whether to take up the activities. There is no expectation that the child will engage in literacy activities at home, no routine, as there is at school. In this way there is a major difference between the school and home curricula.

Martin is not keen on practising literacy skills at home as his mother says;

"No, not an awful lot (of writing at home) - they'd sooner sit and draw than write. He's very good."

"Martin's always been difficult to read to - if he doesn't want to do it, doesn't want to listen then there's not a lot of point ... Like some children you can get to listen to a story - Lance used to be very good."

"We've got some of those (games involving reading) ... Anything that's too much effort for Martin, he's not really interested."

And she mentions his individual characteristics, by way of explaining his reluctance and a reason for not pressuring him into doing literacy work:

"And then there's the difference in children... the older boy, he was ready to start school, but not Martin - he was still a baby. But I think he

will catch up though he had a lot of time off earlier. That's why I'd like to help him. "

Martin's mother Clarrie is willing to help both Martin and Lance, but would like to see the school persuade the children to do more work at home. This would take the onus from her. She expresses this very clearly and forcefully when asked why she thinks the school give children the choice to take books home or not, saying;

"I don't know, I think it's really not putting pressure on the children to read - it's just to let it come - they can fetch them if they like."

She would like the children to do more work at home

" ... I think they should be made to fetch their book home. I mean, he's not brought a book home for about six weeks. That's because that's his choice, he's given that. I think they should be made to bring it home. And something that he can learn to read that's at his level. It's fine for me to read to him, but he really should ... perhaps ..."

but she does not want to be the one to put on pressure;

" ... but at the same time - it's like the bigger one - he will not fetch homework home, because he has a choice. I want him to, I think he should because he needs to. So there's the difference between really pressuring a child to bring a book home and maybe suggesting 'perhaps you'd like to take a book home today'... not every night maybe, but a couple of times a week - and that is part of what they do at school."

"He's having difficulties reading... I said he is to have it (homework) and if he comes out of school I'm sending him back for it, which she (teacher) said was fine. I think where it's been asked for... apparently he got a grade 1 for reading and still doesn't qualify for extra reading... so I need to do it at home"

Cathy takes Lindsey's individual preferences into account and allows her to develop at her own pace:

"...She (Carla) really does enjoy reading and writing, she'll do it for hours. Whereas Lindsey, she's not bothered about pens and paper. Carla was more interested at that age. But of course she was in the infants longer, she was that much older by the end of the school year. In the nursery Lindsey would always go straight for construction, like Lego, where Carla would always

go straight for pens and pencils - that's what they're like."

But Cathy would like Lindsey to do more work at home, in fact she hints that she would like to see her display the same interest as her older sister who enjoys a lot of literacy at home;

"But I wish she'd try and do a bit more at home, she just wants to play. Whereas Carla, she says 'Why can't I have homework?' she wants to do it. You started doing the children's crosswords, didn't you, and the word searches."

Cathy is unwilling to put on pressure, saying:

"Well, by the time they come home from school, especially Lindsey, I'll say 'Let's read the PACT book and draw a picture - she just doesn't want to know, she's had enough at school.'"

On the whole, though Cathy has no need to worry; Lindsey is doing well and the reading does get done eventually:

"... Sometimes it'll (the PACT book) sit there for three days... I just say 'Come on, let's do it.' Sometimes she does it quick."

And Lindsey is keen to join in literacy activities that take place in the home and Cathy is resourceful in finding ways to include her:

"With Lindsey, she gets frustrated, she says 'I want to do it' (a word search), but of course you've got to be able to spell. I'll find the words and she'll draw the line through."

This awareness of individual need, though not expressed in terms of formal theories, does affect the nature of the home curriculum.

Practical aspects

Taking practical considerations into account one would expect parents to have individual time available for reading given that they have less children to deal with than does a class teacher. But as we have seen, though the time may be available, if it is not a time when a child wants to work then the parent does not pressure him or her and so does not necessarily take advantage of the time. This is the case particularly in Martin's family. Suitable materials are limited at home. Martin's family does not use

the library and though they have books at home they are not always suitable for the children to tackle themselves, though they are used for reading to the children. The school does not always provide suitable reading materials either:

"It's fine for me to read to him, but he really should ... perhaps... it's difficult to get them to read books you've got at home if you're not sure of their abilities at school."

"...You see they don't have the PACT system up in the junior so they don't fetch books home at all."

The family does not make much use of written material in the environment either, the children show no interest in it:

"Is he (Martin) interested in other things around him to read, like street signs and adverts and so on?"

"No he's not very interested at all."

So materials for home use are limited and there are constraints on the time available, both of which factors limit the curriculum.

In Lindsey's family, the children are keen to read, but Lindsey does not always want to do so when it would suit her mother. However, a time is usually found. Carla may be keen to read or write at times when it is not very convenient for the family and she says;

"I sometimes get told off for reading, if I'm late for school"

But the parents tend to be indulgent if possible, her mother saying;

"She gets up - like the other morning she'd wrote like a story -a whole story on love and that was in sort of about 10 minutes, when she was meant to be getting ready for school... I was laughing... I don't know, if I sat down to write something I'd have to wrack my brains to think of something to write, and she just sits down and writes."

Cathy makes use of the library:

"I like the library because you get fed up reading the same books here - and the PACT, at

least you get a fresh book every day."

"When we go to the library she'll come back with all her own books, I don't know how she chooses them... she must have some method. Sometimes I say 'Look at this, it looks nice,' but most of the time she wanders off and chooses what she wants... She likes the little books and tapes. They say 'When the bell rings turn the page', she likes that because she's doing it all by herself."

and of text in the environment:

"Yes, I mean, once she (Carla) had learned to read it was everything - road signs - everything - wherever you were she'd see something to read - posters, everything... she'll (Lindsey) ask what they say and why it is there."

Child interview and observation

The child reading aloud was chosen as a situation with which the child would be very familiar, would give data on what happened during a very common practice and during which children might be able to answer questions about their attitudes to reading and their preferences about the help they received. The two children Martin and Lindsey, were the focus of observations of a number of literacy activities in the classroom, they contributed to an interview with the parents at home and were recorded reading with the teacher and a parent. Martin's also read with a friend (a regular activity).

Results of child interview

Martin was a boy with whom it was difficult to communicate and he and his friend enjoyed the book together as there was plenty of time to really enjoy it. Martin's friend gave valuable support and apparently eased the tension of the "gruesome twosome" as Martin's teacher calls a child reading to teacher when it involves such reticent children as Martin. Martin said that he did not like reading all the time because sometimes he does not know all the words but he liked it when it was one of his favourites. The recordings, including those with his teacher and his mother, suggested that Martin enjoyed reading, especially

when it was with a friend. His mother seemed to expect more identification of words than did his teacher and he generally needed a lot of help and support, but appeared to enjoy the sessions.

Lindsey said that she liked all the books she read at school and also liked to choose books at the library and read them with her mother. In recorded sessions the approach of the mother and teacher were very similar and she needed very little help with the very familiar books she chose; they did not seem to expect her to identify every word. She demonstrated great pleasure in reading.

Another technique was tried involving one child reading to another (who was asked to take the role of the teacher). The listener was asked to comment on how s/he helped and the reader was asked how s/he liked the help given, in the hope that a clue would be given as to how the children perceived help from parents and teachers. This, however, was fruitless, children just "didn't know" or giggled.

Contrasting Martin and Lindsey

For Martin and Lindsey the school curricula are very similar having the same foundation but the home curricula are different to each other in some respects. Martin's mother attempts to follow the teacher's advice that a variety of books for enjoyment and meaning are the essential element, though this is perhaps not entirely in line with the mother's own beliefs about what reading should involve. Both Martin and his brother are reluctant readers on the whole, and their mother is reluctant to apply pressure and sanctions. The mother seems not so skilled as the teacher in motivating Martin; indeed, the home does not have the same resources as the teacher, neither the materials nor peers to share a reading session. Therefore, the mother's willingness and positive desire to help Martin cannot be fully used.

Contrasting home and school

How are the two curricula likely to affect the child? Are there likely to be any problems for the child where a disparity exists? In Lindsey's case, the curricula are so similar that there are unlikely to be any such problems. Parents and teachers share a similar philosophy on reading, the girls are keen readers and therefore the mother is motivated. Though occasionally reluctant, Lindsey is normally highly motivated and, unlike Martin, has a good reading model in her older sibling. Her mother is very aware of the material available for reading, both in books and in the environment and makes use of them readily. It is hard to say whether in pre-school days materials provided stimulated the children or whether the child's interest demanded the materials, but in this case there is the suggestion that the older child's interest has been there since a very early time.

For Martin, there is possibly some disparity between the two curricula in so far as the mother is not as confident as the teacher with regard to the underlying philosophy of early reading and does not provide the same materials, but she attempts to follow the teacher's advice. There appear to be no particular problems as the mother does not attempt to force a home curriculum on Martin. He may not be benefiting from his mother's help and the situation might be improved by more specific communication between home and school, such that the mother would be more confident in what she attempts and such that Martin was in more of a routine regarding the taking home of suitable reading material.

The home lacks aspects of the school curriculum, e.g. there is no maths, science or topic work to provide reading material, however home provides its own range of literacy experiences for family communications, shopping and street signs and directions. Home and parents can be regarded as a very valuable resource in complementing and supplementing the teaching of literacy.

Conclusion

The home offers rich and meaningful literacy experiences, different to school experiences. Parents may have a very clear understanding of the school's aims and methods and can help their children in the same way. There may be gaps in the parents knowledge of how to help and the school could perhaps help by giving parents more information about methods. School and home differ in a major way in that the school's main business is to make literacy an indisputable part of the school day, whereas in the home, literacy activities are optional. This does not seem to cause any problems, although one parent would prefer it if the school had a system whereby home reading was more a routine than a choice. Even where children have different experiences at home and school, this does not seem to cause problems for them.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE PRELIMINARY STUDIES TO THE MAIN STUDY

The aims of the four preliminary studies were achieved and the studies proved useful in a number of ways;

1) They provided some basic data on common literacy practices in both homes and schools that could be investigated in the main study; the child reading aloud to an adult and the kind of help given in identifying unknown words were selected as a focal point for the main study.

2) The studies demonstrated that a small sample could yield a great deal of detailed data. The sample needed to be organised in such a way that the child's experience could be examined and home and school could be compared; a "triad" of child/parent/teacher was a feasible and useful way to study these.

3) The studies demonstrated that there were a number of ways of collecting relevant data, namely interviews for adults and children, observations of both general and specific activities and using activities that engaged the child's interest in order to examine practices and as a

framework for asking children questions. Some appropriate tools have been developed and these could be successfully combined for the main study.

4) The studies demonstrated the usefulness of a framework of a curriculum which would help to describe and compare the school and home curricula.

5) It was no longer desirable to include the child in the adult interview because of the way the interview was likely to develop and because the child would have the opportunity to speak during reading sessions.

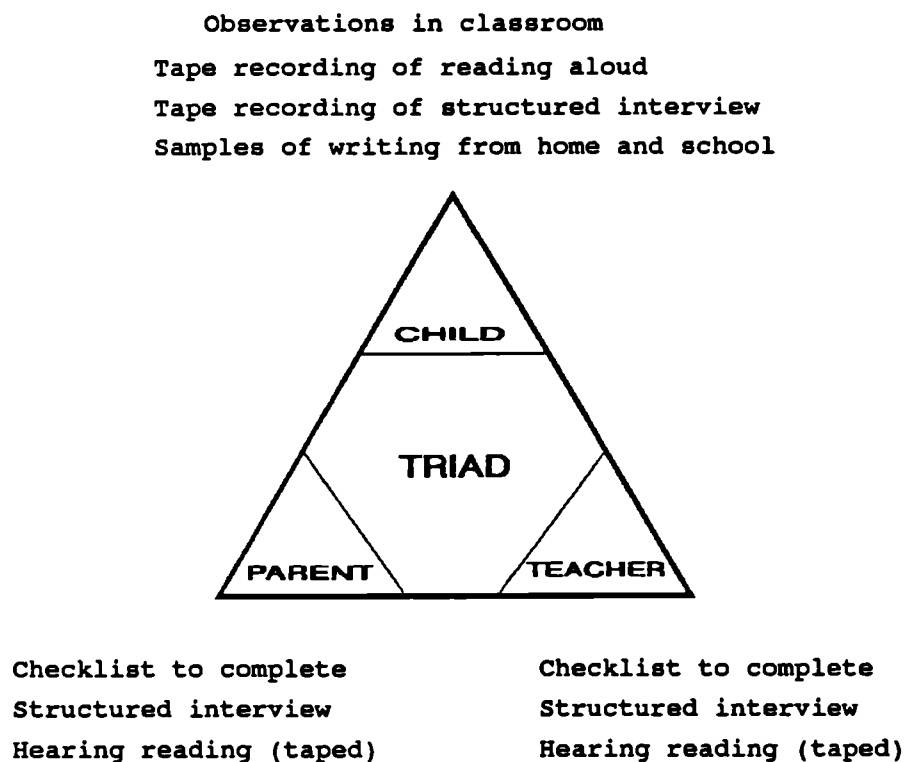
Using the experiences from the preliminary studies, a main study was planned and carried out. This is described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY FOR THE MAIN STUDY

THE AIM OF THE MAIN STUDY RESEARCH DESIGN

The main research questions concern the nature of the curricula at home and school, how they are designed and how the curricula affect children. The study was to be descriptive and comparative and for this reason collection of qualitative data (as discussed in a previous chapter) was considered appropriate. Checklists, tape recorded structured interviews, observations and tape recorded natural situations were to be used. The data would be collected from children, teachers and parents as shown in FIGURE 3.

FIGURE 3 - TYPES OF DATA FROM MEMBERS OF THE TRIADS



The nature of the data collection, presentation and analysis prohibited a large sample size, but since the research intention was to open up a research question rather than to solve one, a small number of triads was expected to yield useful insights. A group comprising child, teacher and parent would be considered a triad;

because of the way the sample was recruited, the teacher was part of two or three triads although obviously any child or parent would only be part of one triad. The data was collected from the members of the triads using slightly different tools appropriate to the questions to be answered. The data collection was carried out largely in the order listed, although in the case of the children's data this plan was not always possible for practical reasons.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESEARCH TOOLS

A rationale for including questions

As a result of the preliminary study a series of research tools was devised which comprised checklists and structured interview schedules for parents and teachers, an observation schedule and semi-structured interview for children and a series of questions to ask parents and children during a reading aloud session. These will be discussed in detail in the next sections but briefly, questions were related to components of the model of the curriculum (discussed in a previous chapter) influencing planning and delivery of the curriculum, selected literacy practices that go on in home and school and the relationship between home and school with regard to literacy learning.

The reasons for including these broad areas have already been discussed, but an outline of these issues may serve as a useful reminder of what is involved before going on to discuss how specific questions relate to the model, to practices and to the comparison of literacy learning at home and school.

The curriculum model

This has four main components:

- a) Beliefs about literacy would include broad aims in teaching literacy, the value of knowledge taught, beliefs about the process of learning to read, the skills that children need in learning to read and the role of practice, repetition, reinforcement and praise

- b) psychology of participants would include considerations of motivation and recognising individual differences and stages of development.
- c) social influences would include government and legal demands including National Curriculum and local policy, cultural expectation of parental involvement, demographic factors that determine the perceived needs of particular groups, general and specific expectations and the influence of peers
- d) practical aspects would include time, space, energy and materials available at home and school and the instructions necessary for carrying out a school directed home reading programme.

Practices

The literacy practices selected for special attention include the child reading aloud to an adult and the adult reading aloud to the child and identifying words; these are very common practices, as discussed earlier. Other literacy activities are investigated, to enable a description of the use made of materials other than books and activities that may not involve reading aloud.

Home and school

The experiences of the child in home and school, and especially the experience of transferring from one to the other were central to the study and these areas have been discussed earlier. It was important to have full descriptions of what activities children engaged in, who directed them and the roles of, and relationship between, parents and teachers.

Practical issues

A number of practical aspects were considered in devising the checklist and the interview schedules. The first was that a comparison was to be made between home and school, therefore the questions needed to be as near the same as possible (apart for minor details) and avoid technical terminology for the sake of the non-specialist adults who

would answer them. The literacy practices investigated were ones which were easy to observe and note with the minimum intrusion. There had to be no ethical objection to asking any question and possible sensitive areas had to be approached with discretion. To facilitate comparison, all questions were ones to which one can reasonably expect any parent or teacher to have an answer and questions were related to children aged four to six at home and school. Given these conditions, the checklists and interviews as well as the observations could not be too time consuming as teachers and parents had indicated that they had only limited time to devote to the research. These criteria governed the construction of the research tools.

THE RESEARCH TOOLS USED

All checklists, interviews and observation procedures were tried out and discussed with adults and children before being finalised for use with the participants of the main study.

Checklist for parents and teachers

Relevance of the questions

The checklists (Appendices 19 and 20, completed for Case 1) were developed so as to gather some basic information about literacy practices in home and school, information about the role and relationship between parent and teacher and influences in planning a curriculum. Dealing with each of these in turn we can see how different questions are related to different aspects of the study.

Literacy practices

These are of intrinsic interest and data can be used to compare home and school.

Area to be investigated	Specific questions	Number of question
General literacy activities	In what activities do children engage	14, 15
Adult reads aloud to child	What is read To whom (individual/group)	1b 1b
Child reads aloud to adult	What is read By whom (individual/group) Individual reads how often	1a 1a 1

	Individual reads to whom	2
	What type of reading is important	1c
	Reason for reading aloud	3
	How adult helps reading	4
Identifying words	How adult helps child	5

Home and school relationships

Area to be investigated	Specific questions	Number of question
Attitude to parents helping with reading	Can parents help in principle	22
	How parents are perceived	24
	How parents might help	23

The curriculum

Area to be investigated	Specific questions	Number of question
Beliefs about literacy	Beliefs about learning to read - skills needed and experiences necessary	16, 17
	Source of ideas	19, 20
Social influences	What influences from outside immediate environment and time	25
Psychology of participants	Extent of individual catering	21, 21a
	Importance of child's preference	8e
Practical aspects	Materials preferred	6a, 6b, 6c, 8, 8c, 6, 8d
	Organising time	9

For the small sample in the study, as well as collecting this basic data, the checklist was expected to be useful preparatory tool for the interview in helping participants think about some of the issues before they were interviewed. It was also a useful tool for validating what parents said in the interview. The checklist was planned so that it would take about 30 minutes to complete.

Another intention in designing the checklist was that it might also be used to gather data from a large sample of parents and teachers to see if the results of the study could be generalised; because of the substantial volume of work with the triads, it was not feasible to use it on a large sample.

Interview schedule for parents and teachers

Teachers and especially parents usually enjoy talking about their practices and their children, and an interview (given a warm and favourable atmosphere) provides an opportunity to convey more subtle and deeply felt attitudes and beliefs than a checklist can.

Relevance of the questions

The interview schedule was designed to last about 45 minutes. Questions tended to be indirect or open so that respondents had the opportunity to express views freely.

The intention of the interview schedule (Appendices 9 and 10) was to ask further details about some of the items in the checklist (which did not give enough detailed data on its own) and to ask general questions about the individual child, his or her progress and to give an opportunity for parents to add comments, all of which would have been inappropriate to a checklist.

Dealing with each aspect in turn we can see how different questions are related to different aspects of the study.

Literacy practices

The following literacy practices are of intrinsic interest and are considered in comparing the home and the school.

Area to be investigated	Specific questions	Number of question
Adult reads to child	How does it help child? (Implies what is done)	1
Child reads to adult	How does it help child? (Implies what is done)	2
Identifying words	How does adult help? When/why does it vary?	4
Pre-school literacy experiences	Is child keen reader? Was s/he before school?	16, 16a, 17, 18

Home and school relationships

Area to be investigated	Specific questions	Number of question
Who instigates parental help?	What do parents do not specifically requested by school? What instructions are given to parents by school?	8 9
Satisfaction with	Pleased with way school	13

system	handles reading?	
	Anything adult would like to change regarding reading?	14
Difficulties for child in home/school transfer	Does child appear to experience any confusions/difficulties in coping with two systems?	20
	Is there anything you would like to add?	21

The curriculum model

Area to be investigated	Specific questions	Number of question
Beliefs about the reading process	How does adult reading aloud help child's reading?	1
	How does child reading aloud help child's reading?	2
	How is child helped with difficult words? (Implies skills needed in reading)	4
	How do you think children learn to read?	6
	Activities instigated by home? (Implies skills needed for reading)	8
Beliefs about where teaching can take place	Can parents help?	7
	What are your reservations?	7
	Are there cases when parents can't or shouldn't help?	
	What can the parent offer?	10
	What can the school offer?	11
Social influences	How do "other influences" (from Q25 on checklist) affect helping?	12
	Reservations about parents helping - assumes that parents generally expected to help	7
Psychology of participants		
Motivation, learning style, individuality, early interests	Pleased with school methods?	13
	Comment on child's progress	15
	Is child keen reader?	16
	Early interest in literacy?	17, 18
	How was interest stimulated?	19
	How do children learn to read?	17
	Opportunity to state learning theories, necessary conditions for reading	
Practical aspects		
Time available	How often and for how long do you hear child reading?	3
Materials	Are home and school books used differently?	5
	Do you particularly use print from all around us?	5
Instructions	How much instruction from school about using materials provided by school?	9

Observations of literacy activities

This was not always possible at home, but observations were

planned to be carried out in the classroom to compare with teacher's reports of children's literacy activities; parts of the checklist (Appendix 11) were to be used to note and organise the data, and unstructured notes were to be made on any other activities taking place. All items included in the checklist had been observed on several occasions during the preliminary study, and were, therefore, judged to be common activities. Examples of written work children had done at home were collected. The intention of the observations was to confirm what adults had reported in the checklists and interviews and to extend the data.

Audio tape recordings of reading at home and school

Audio tape recordings were used to examine one common literacy activity (the child reading aloud to an adult) in detail and to obtain data on how children read, how and why the adult helped, and how children responded (Appendix 12).

Recordings were planned in the classroom with the teacher and at home with a parent; questions to the adult as to why s/he had chosen to help in a particular way and to the child as to whether and how it had helped were to be asked during the session if it seemed not to interrupt the flow, or otherwise at the end of the session.

Child interview

A very important aspect of the study is the effect of two separate curricula on children and their feelings about transferring from one to the other.

Children were to be asked whether what the teacher or parent did was helpful, whether they did similar things, and whether the child had preferences about where they read and how they were helped or whether they experienced confusions. The questions had to be adaptable and it was often necessary to refer to an example of an activity that had occurred during a session, so only a framework of questions is given in Appendix 12. Much questioning of the

children occurred in relation to other activities, not as a single structured interview (see section on carrying out children's interviews).

CONSTRUCTING THE SAMPLE

Contacting schools and recruiting teachers

Potential participants were sought by approaching schools. It was not anticipated that there would be any difficulty finding willing children and parents, though it was anticipated that teachers willing and able to both spare the time and fit an observer into the classroom might not be so easy to find. This proved to be the case. Five schools were approached by phone. They both were geographically convenient to the writer (ease of travelling to schools and homes, in some cases in the evening and at weekends, was important) and three heads consented to their schools taking part. The heads suggested teachers of children aged four to six who would be willing to take part and suggested that the writer should visit the school and explain the research in detail and invite the teachers to take part. All teachers approached in this way, were given written information on the study (Appendix 13) and agreed very willingly to participate. As it was the first year of year two National Curriculum assessments, a school could not be found in which heads felt that year two teachers would feel able to participate. This was a distinct drawback as far as the study was concerned as the intention was to study a number of children at different ages and stages of development, including 7 year olds (Year 2).

Background to the schools and participants

The three schools the children attended were all in inner London and had a number of similarities (which facilitated comparisons). The Victorian buildings were a similar age although the state of repair and decoration varied. All were surrounded by a mixture of relatively expensive renovated family houses, rented or owned converted flats and local authority rented accommodation of varied ages and

states of repair. The schools served a very mixed population, a number of ethnic minority groups were represented in all three schools, but no single group in very large numbers. All schools used PACT (Parents and children and teachers together, a system for involving parents in helping with reading, Bloom 1987) though in slightly different ways, and all schools had taken part in research projects in the past. The participants represented a range of ages, personal circumstances and racial groups; these characteristics are only referred to where it is thought relevant to the planning and delivery of the curriculum.

Choosing children and parents

It was hoped that there would be a variety of children, teachers and parents who would think and behave differently, including equal numbers of girls and boys and different stages of development in literacy.

The idea of achievement in literacy, was discussed with the teachers at some length; for the nursery and reception classes in particular, teachers found it difficult to separate an assessment of the achievement in reading from considerations of time in school, pre-school opportunities, general factors of settling down and how children might change in the future. They were reluctant to judge and label children's achievements. Discussions were of intrinsic interest and it was felt that it was important that teachers felt comfortable with the selection and general methods of the study if they were to participate fully. Eventually three achievement groups were agreed upon, namely those having got off to a very good start (the highest achievement group), those doing fairly well (middle group) and those who had not really made much of a start in literacy yet (lowest group).

Using the methods of Duffy and Anderson (1982) the name of each child was written on a card and the teacher was asked to sort the cards into three categories for the final

selection. Four of five teachers felt able to nominate only two children from their class as they thought three might take up too much time; they also thought that it was inappropriate to include the lowest achievers as this might raise anxieties in children and parents about reading ability given that a lot of the questions were related to reading aloud and identifying words. The writer agreed to this, though in the case of the year one teacher this was not an issue, and she agreed to nominate three children. Teachers also wanted to remove names of those children whose parents they thought might not co-operate; by the writer's preference these children would not have been removed from the selection procedure on the grounds that the selection should be as random as possible, all parents could provide interesting data and could be approached frankly and would have the right to decline the invitation to participate. However teachers were adamant and so concerned about causing upset that it was agreed to remove likely uncooperative parents from the selection procedure.

Within the agreed achievement levels and with potentially non-cooperative parents removed, teachers made a random selection of children by choosing a card (placed face-down on the table) from each of the ability levels they had agreed could participate, and these were balanced roughly between boys and girls.

Teachers wanted to approach the parents themselves to ensure that they understood that the selection was random and not connected with a problem with their child's reading, and to obtain their consent to participate. After this, letters were sent to parents by the writer explaining the study, what participation would involve and assuring confidentiality (Appendix 14). No parent refused to cooperate and some were markedly enthusiastic about the opportunity to discuss the issues. The letters were addressed to both parents except where it was known that there was a lone parent; interestingly only two out of a possible eight fathers took part in the interviews,

although some of them were reported hearing their children read at least sometimes at home.

The sample

A sample of eleven triads was recruited and names were changed to preserve confidentiality. The table below summarises details; it includes the teacher's rating of the child's literacy level (see page 92 for criteria) and occupation of the parent or parents interviewed; the sample is clearly advantaged in socio-economic terms.

<u>Child</u>	<u>(age)</u>	<u>Literacy level</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Parent(s) interviewed</u>	<u>Parent(s) occupation</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
Andrew	(4)	High	Nursery	Alan and Celia	Businessman	Heather
Helen	(4)	High	Nursery	Julia	Scientist	Heather
Emma	(5)	Middle	Reception	Judith	Designer	Diana
Maria	(5)	High	Reception	Lucy	FE Teacher	Diana
Rex	(5)	High	Reception	Jack and Laura	Doctor	Kitty
Mike	(5)	Middle	Reception	Carol	Doctor	Kitty
Lee	(5)	Middle	Reception	Beverley	Ex Art teacher	Maggie
Felicity	(5)	High	Reception	Miranda	Secretary	Maggie
					Journalist	
Matthew	(6)	Low	Year 1	Hayley	Play leader	Melissa
Sue	(6)	High	Year 1	Betty	Not known	Melissa
Holly	(6)	Middle	Year 1	Joan	Not known	Melissa

So the total sample comprised five teachers, eleven children and eleven sets of parents; the sample was an "opportunity sample" selected more by force of circumstance than by ideal choice. However, it was considered to be of a feasible size and variety for the study which was to be descriptive and comparative; the intention was not to generalise the results nor to use the tools for standardised assessments.

It was acknowledged that there could be major differences between schools with different perspectives and homes with different socio-cultural backgrounds, however, the aims were to compare home and school for individual children and to develop a methodology that could be widely applied. Therefore, the limitations of the sample were not considered to detract from the value of the study in any major way.

CARRYING OUT THE DATA COLLECTION

Organising a work schedule

It was also obvious that the parent had been contacted through the school. It was, therefore, almost inevitable that the interviewer would be viewed as an agent of the school, but every effort was made to emphasise that the interviewer was an independent researcher (time being taken to explain the purpose and development of the research and to give assurances about the confidentiality of the data at the time of arranging the interview and prior to the interview). There was no impression gained that either teachers or parents were less than frank in expressing their opinions even when it was obvious that teacher and parent did not share the same opinion. The interviewer had no impression of mistrust from any parent or teacher interviewed.

However, the interview content might have been influenced by parents' perceptions of a link with the school. In particular, they may have referred to activities they thought of interest in relation to school, rather than to the full range of home-based literacy activities.

Completing the checklists

Preliminary contact was made either by phone or in person with parents and teachers to explain that checklists would be sent or given. An explanation was given about completing them and this was summarised on the front page of the checklists (Appendices 19 and 20). A note was attached asking for the checklists to be returned when completed (in the stamped addressed envelope enclosed to ensure confidentiality) to the writer so that they arrived before the interview. Some participants made quite lengthy notes and others filled in the basic checklist as requested. Time for completing varied between 25 and 45 minutes .

The adults' interviews

Arrangements were made personally with the teachers and by telephone with the parents for a convenient time to discuss reading and writing and the child. Adults were asked to suggest a time when they would be able to spare at least 45

minute when the child was not present for the interview (the child would obviously be present at a later recording session). The parents were interviewed at home and the teachers at school so the atmosphere in general was comfortable, unhurried and adults were able to speak freely.

Completed checklists were examined before the interview to get a general impression of the home or school literacy activities or to make notes on any particular points raised by the adult participant. It was also necessary to make slight adjustments to the wording or to frame questions according to the answers in the checklist (for example, "You say that you think most parents can help with reading. Do you have any reservations about that?" or "You say that you don't think parents can help with reading. Why is that?").

Before the interview began adults were told that they would be asked both about some of the items on the checklist in more detail, some questions which had not been appropriate to the checklist and some questions about the child's progress. Checklists were given back to the parents so they could refer to them during the interview and they were offered a few minutes to look at what they had marked to refresh their memories. A few parents wanted to spend a few minutes in general chat or asking more details about the research, although all adults were offered time at the end of the interview to add comments and ask questions.

A few parents asked for copies of the checklist as they said it gave some useful ideas for activities for their children, about which they had not previously thought. With the exception of one parent who gave the impression that she was reluctant and had little time to spare, adults appeared to enjoy the interview or at least appreciate the opportunity to talk over the issues.

Observations of literacy activities

Each classroom was visited a number of times, usually to observe more than one child participant in the same class. Literacy activities were observed and noted using parts of the checklist (Appendix 11) and notes made on how children carried out the work. It was not possible to observe to the same extent in the home as parents indicated that there was not a set time for literacy activities and it was felt that time was both too limited and observations too intrusive to try to observe many literacy activities at home. However, examples of the children's written work from home was collected and the observational data from school along with samples of the children's written work and audio recordings from both home and school were judged sufficient for the purposes of the study.

Audio tape recordings of reading aloud

It was hoped that the recorded session of reading aloud would be as natural as possible, so adults were asked to listen or help with a book in the normal way, in the usual setting, at the usual time of day using the usual books and doing the same things as he or she normally did.

Expecting that an observer, especially with a tape recorder, might be intrusive, two sessions were planned to check how natural were recorded sessions with and without an observer. Adults were asked to hear the child read without an observer. In the event, there was very poor compliance for recording the session of reading without an observer (tapes were obtained for one out of five teachers and three out of eleven parents); adults seemed not to get round to recording alone despite notes and personal and telephone reminders.

A session with the observer was requested, in the normal setting, and was expected to last 10 - 15 minutes, about the normal reported time for reading aloud with extra time for questions. Before the session started participants were told that there may be some questions to ask, but were asked to carry on as usual. A small tape recorder with a

built in microphone was used and was placed close enough to pick up sound without distortion but preferably far enough away from children for them to be neither disturbed by it nor to tempt them to tamper with it. The quality of recordings was generally satisfactory but with some background disturbance in some classroom situations. With hindsight, a more directional microphone might have been preferable.

The reading aloud sessions with an observer were generally carried out very easily and the adults in general seemed to enjoy explaining how they were helping. In one case a teacher indicated that she would be more comfortable to hear reading in a quiet classroom (something she would only occasionally do if the rest of the class were having a lesson elsewhere), otherwise the setting was the usual one (in the classroom this included the inevitable interruptions from 4-6 year olds). Eight out of the eleven parents and all five teachers consented to an observed session. Three parents declined an observed session because they were too busy; for these parents and their children there were no recording at all of reading aloud.

For the four adults for which unobserved and observed recorded sessions were available there was no noticeable difference in their behaviour with and without an observer, and only one teacher commented on the tape recorder being slightly inhibiting for her and the children during the two sessions she recorded. It can reasonably be assumed that the recordings available were as natural as possible and that the presence of observer and machinery was not unduly intrusive.

Children's interviews

From earlier interviews, it emerged that it was not easy for children to express themselves in an isolated interview; nor was it possible to be as structured in the children's interviews as in the adult's interviews. It was much easier to get children's views in the context of a

relevant activity (for example talking about which books were suitable for different ages and purposes.)

Advantage was taken of any visit to the classroom when the children were in a "working atmosphere" engaged in reading and writing tasks to ask some of the planned questions (Appendix 12) about their preferences for reading and writing and being helped. There was also an opportunity to meet and talk to the children at home when a recording of reading aloud was being made, so parents were asked to have available any examples of books the child might read at home and any written work they had done at home. This was to be both for general information and to provide a talking point with the child about comparisons between home and school. Sometimes a favourable opportunity to ask questions was seen and taken though it had not necessarily been planned to ask questions, and it was considered that the naturalness of the situation added to rather than detracted from the study.

As a lot of the children's questions were asked spontaneously, a careful check had to be made as to whether all questions had been covered. The children appeared to enjoy talking about themselves and their work though some found it difficult to say much about their preferences. One parent reported that after a time her child did not like being singled out, although this was not apparent to the writer who was very concerned to approach children in a relaxed atmosphere and to talk to them in a group while the normal routine was going on.

DATA ANALYSIS

There were a number of questions asked which the data was to answer in order to arrive at useful curriculum descriptions for later comparative analysis. The relationship of the questions (and therefore the answers to them) to the theoretical framework of the model of the curriculum, and the rationale for including questions on particular literacy practices and relationships between

home and school has previously been explained. Briefly, the questions concerned common literacy practices in home and school, philosophical, psychological and social components of the model of the curriculum, the roles of parent and teacher in becoming literate, the practical constraints of time, space and materials on delivering the curriculum, difficulties, conflicts or advantages arising for adult or child in connection with two curricula and the child's views and feelings about the curricula that are delivered to him or her. The procedures for analyzing data are described below.

Adult data

The data came mainly from the interviews with parents and teachers but there was also useful data in the checklists, and in observations in home and school.

The data was analyzed as follows:

- 1) The structured interview was transcribed.
- 2) The transcriptions were read through several times to get a general "feel" for the data.
- 3) Checklists and observational notes were compared with transcripts for consistency and for any points not mentioned in the interview. Notes were made in relation to the headings described below.
- 4) Considering both the questions to be answered and the data, headings were formed which arose from the areas to be investigated as described earlier (see pages 3-6). Short statements were listed under the appropriate headings and grouped together as shown below.

BELIEFS, ATTITUDES AND KNOWLEDGE OF LEARNING TO READ

What skills are mentioned as being important in learning to read?

How does adult think reading aloud helps learning?

How does the adult think children learn to read?

Why is being able to read important?

Adults' answers would reflect beliefs about becoming

literate.

PSYCHOLOGY OF PARTICIPANTS - INCLUDING INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES (of both child and adult)

Mention that any of the following individual characteristics are taken into account when helping with reading:

Temperament, inclination, motivation, learning style and ability

Mention of any learning theories and their application; if taken into account, why and how?

SOCIAL INFLUENCES

What influences other than those above affect curriculum planning and delivery?

PRACTICAL ASPECTS

Are there limitations on time, space, manpower, materials or adult's knowledge that affect practices?

Would the adult like to change any of these?

WHAT EXPERIENCES IS THE CHILD GIVEN (in home and school)

ARE THERE ANY DIFFERENCES OR CONFLICTS BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS

What are the roles (as perceived by themselves and the others) of parents/teachers and home/school in learning to read?

A brief note not exceeding one line was made from the data under the appropriate heading with a transcript page number for cross-reference. It was important to discover this way of dealing with the data because as the preliminary study showed, the method of organising the data attempted and described earlier (cutting up transcripts and rearranging

them) proved very cumbersome and chaotic.

Child data

The audio recordings of children reading aloud

1) The very valuable recordings of the child reading aloud, being helped and being asked for views were transcribed. Also transcribed were recordings, mainly from the classroom, during observational sessions which contained the child's views and preferences. (It became very obvious that all tape recordings must have a message at the beginning of each recording stating the names of those being interviewed, and tapes must be very clearly labelled immediately. This saves time and confusion when transcribing).

2) These transcripts were examined for different ways that the adult encouraged and helped the child to read, including identifying those words that created difficulties for the child.

Campbell's (1984) categories of children's miscues i.e.

Substitution	Omission	Repetition	Sounding out
Insertion	Self-correction	Hesitation	

and teacher's responses i.e.

Non-response	Word cues	Negative feedback
Provide	Phonic analysis	Comprehension

plus a few categories from Hannon et al (1986) were useful when analyzing the transcripts. Relevant examples were listed and referred to in the text.

Putting the data together and validating descriptions

A "portrait" was drawn of the triad (child, parent and teacher) to describe the child's experiences of literacy at home and school, their views on the help given and the adult's ideas about planning and delivering the curriculum; interview transcripts and summaries, and observational data were mainly used. Checklist data were found too cumbersome for detailed analysis and were used mainly to cross-check other data, although the checklist was particularly useful in comparing what parents did at home with what the schools

asked them to do; the checklist was also very useful in preparing parents for the interview. Quotations and examples of reading aloud were used in the descriptions as appropriate.

As a means of validating the descriptions, that is ensuring appropriate interpretation of data (including factors like the tone of voice) and safeguarding against bias, adult participants were sent a copy of his or her description and asked if there was anything with which they did not agree; they were asked to reply within a month. In addition three descriptions with tape recordings were given to acquaintances who had an interest in the research but had little knowledge of its background or details; each was asked to listen to the tape and read the description and asked to comment on anything with which he or she did not agree (for instructions see Appendix 15). Three participants and all acquaintances made only minor comments most of which were incorporated after tapes, transcripts and descriptions were reconsidered. Thus all descriptions were considered to be reasonable and unbiased, (including two for which the participant could not be traced and which were validated by an acquaintance).

The next chapter contains an explanation of how data from each research tool was used to form the descriptions of the triads, followed by the descriptions which form the body of the main study.

CHAPTER 5 THE MAIN STUDY

INTRODUCTION TO THE TRIADS

The descriptions of child/teacher/parent triads are drawn from a combination of data gathered using the various tools as follows.

RELATING THE TOOLS TO THE DESCRIPTIONS

Parents' and teacher's planning and delivery of a curriculum - from the interviews and checklists (the latter provided both data to add to the interview data and provided a way of cross-checking what adults said during the interviews). Tone of voice or expression of emotion was only taken into account if this was obvious on the tapes or if a particular reference was made to such by interviewer or interviewee on the tape; comments related to the curriculum or any difficulties arising, made in casual conversations with the participants, were only taken into account if there was further reference during the interview and on the tape. The idea of a curriculum being planned and delivered is used tentatively, at least in the cases of the parents, as the concept of a curriculum was never discussed specifically.

The children's experiences - from what the adults describe in the interview and checklist, from notes made on observations in the classroom and from tape recordings of sessions of reading aloud at home or school or from tape recordings made in the classroom during observation sessions.

Children reading aloud - from taped sessions of the child reading to an adult at home and school; excerpts are used to illustrate different ways of helping with reading.

The children's comments - from the semi-structured interview for children administered mainly during the reading aloud sessions; it was not always possible to get this data at that time and sometimes questions were asked during observation sessions in the classroom or when appropriate.

Comparisons of the home and school situation - came from

what adults said specifically in the interviews or indicated on the checklist and from comparing descriptions of triads.

There is necessarily a certain amount of inference and interpretation in this section. As argued in chapter 2, this is the nature of the methodology and of the type of qualitative data used. This does not imply a weakness in the data; an inference is weak if based on a single statement, but far stronger if based on several statements. Where the inference is considered weak this will be pointed out in the descriptions, otherwise the inference can be taken to be supported by more than one statement.

RELATING THE DESCRIPTIONS TO THE MODEL OF CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DELIVERY

A model of the curriculum is described in an earlier chapter but it may be helpful here to have a resume of what is included under each category of factors influencing the organisation of the data in the study.

Beliefs about literacy development

Broad aims in teaching literacy

Value of being literate

Beliefs about the process of learning to read

Beliefs about the conditions needed for learning to read including skills adults think children need, the necessity of hearing children read, the role of practice, repetition, reinforcement and praise

Beliefs about who can teach reading

Psychology of the participants

Individual characteristics that affect learning - ability, motivation, learning style, stages of development

Social influences

Government and legal demands including National Curriculum and local policy

Expectation of parental involvement

Demographic factors that determine the perceived needs of

particular groups

General and specific cultural expectations

Influence of peers

Socio-cultural background to home literacy values and experience

Practical aspects

Available time, space, manpower, energy and materials

Instructions sent from school (teachers descriptions only),

Instructions received from school (parents descriptions only)

PRESENTATION OF THE TRIADS

The descriptions for the home and school curricula are derived mainly from the above categories. The descriptions of the child's experiences are based largely on observation, especially that of hearing reading.

The children's reading and adults responses to it will be related mainly to Campbell's (1988) categories; the different elements of the descriptions are presented in the same order for each triad as follows;

The child at home

Description of child at home and home background.

Description of the literacy experiences the child has at home linked with the parents' planning and related to the model of the curriculum.

Description of the child's experience of reading aloud at home including the setting, examples of different ways the child is helped and how the experience relates to what the parent has said previously about how the child is helped. This will include the child's comments and behaviour when reading aloud.

The child at school

Description of the child at school and the school background.

Description of the literacy experiences the child has at school linked with the teacher's planning and related to the model of the curriculum. Descriptions are both general for the whole class and describe the situation in particular for

the individual child. Where a second or third child is introduced, references will be made to the general setting as previously described and comments on the individual will be emphasised.

Description of the child's experience of reading aloud at school including the setting, examples of different ways the child is helped and how the experience relates to what the teacher has said previously about how the child is helped. This will include the child's comments and behaviour when reading aloud.

Comparison of home and school curriculum

A description of any differences, likenesses and conflicts between home and school in the child's experiences of the literacy curricula, particularly the child's comments on these factors. This plan will be followed for each child in turn for each teacher and each age group starting with the youngest group.

The teachers

There is a difficulty in presenting the data related to each teacher and school setting where a teacher is shared between two or three children; it is hoped that this is overcome by referring back to general descriptions and focusing on experiences specific to individuals, thereby preserving a full and credible description for all children.

Order of the triads

The triads are presented in three different ways. The first triad (Case 1) is presented in a detailed and annotated form to show how corresponding descriptions were derived from the interview data (Appendices 16, 17 and 18). The references in brackets refer to the page and line number of the transcript in the appendices. The checklist and observational data (to which detailed reference is not made) were used mainly to reinforce interview data from which an inference was drawn. The parent's checklist was particularly useful in comparing what parents did at home and what the school asked parents to do. The presentation is such as to enable the reader to check

the validity of the inferences made and to indicate how other case descriptions were derived.

Subsequent triads are presented either in a detailed form (without annotations - cases 3, 7, 9), or a short form (without annotations - cases 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11) and have been derived from the data in the same way as the first triad. The reason for presenting shorter versions is to make the reading easier; while every participant and triad is interesting, lengthier descriptions do not necessarily add substantially to the conclusions of the research.

The data are reported for each triad in such a way as to maintain a description of the overall coherence of the curricula as well as contributing factors - the reports are therefore qualitative in nature. Cases are numbered and presented in ascending age order. Cases 1 - 6 are from the same school, while Cases 7 - 8 and Cases 9 - 11 are from two other schools.

THE FOUR-YEAR-OLDSCASE 1Andrew at home

Andrew at four and a half is a cheerful and confident boy without brothers or sisters and lives with his parents in a renovated house in a mixed area of London. After school he is looked after by his nanny who arranges many social activities for him which he enjoys.

Alan and Celia, Andrew's parents, have heavy work commitments, his father managing his own business and his mother working as a scientist; after work and at weekends they are very concerned to spend time with Andrew sharing family activities. Evenings are an opportunity for them to give Andrew undivided attention and much of this time is spent with books in a relaxed and loving atmosphere which is highly valued by all three.

Alan and Celia are one of the very few sets of parents who filled in the checklist and were interviewed together. They share most of their opinions; where there is a divergence this will be pointed out.

Parental beliefs and practices relating to literacy development

Andrew's parents believe that at his age enjoyment of books is more important than formal reading skills (304/7-9, 303/47-48, 297/29-30). They feel that having and using books at home is a part of a child's everyday life (304/49-55), particularly as Andrew derives so much pleasure from them (295/18-31, 292/10-11).

Whether reading to Andrew or listening to him attempting to read himself, his parents actively encourage Andrew to enjoy several aspects of books, that is the pictures (292/5-7), the familiarity leading to recitation of the story (292/14-18, 294/13-17), the general meaning, the story itself and the appearance and sound of words (294/27-29). Inventing a story for a book without words is an activity which both he and

his parents particularly enjoy (293/39-43, 304/36-41). While his parents do not think these activities help his reading directly, they expect that they will interest and motivate Andrew to learn to read in due course (292/10-11, 292/26). Andrew often recites memorised text and Alan encourages him to do this as it helps him to memorise some words (292/8) as well as providing an opportunity for the parents to give positive reinforcement and encouragement which they think essential to learning.

Andrew's parents feel that it is important for Andrew to see his parents as reading models e.g. Andrew looks at newspapers and magazines; he imitates his parents turning pages, looks at pictures and asks about the contents (295/32-35).

Alan and Celia believe that reading is of great importance in itself (298/33-37) but that, ultimately, it is also a part of a mastery of good English which they value very highly (301/6-26). They believe and hope that Andrew will eventually be able to express himself clearly and accurately in English, be able to spell well and read with ease and pleasure. They believe this to be essential to adult life, regardless of what career path Andrew might choose; good habits are important and should start with the beginning of language (301/32-35). They are very keen to help him to achieve these aims.

Alan and Celia view reading as a series of skills, the important ones being memorising irregular words (296/23-24, 296/17-20), linking them with visual images and putting sounds to letters to build words (296/4-6, 295/54-56). This process is helped by using pictures to give a clue to the word (295/6-9). Some of the PACT books which Andrew brings home are very simple books with a few words on each page and are used to help him learn the important skills. These books are either read aloud to Andrew, or he reads them himself, sometimes being able to identify a word accurately (292/8). Simple books (with only a few words) offer an opportunity for Andrew to identify sounds that he knows (292/26) for instance

"ee" and "oo" (294/50) and to use them to identify a word. Andrew knows the names of the letters and some sounds and his parents will use his attempts at reading to teach sounds and how they blend into words; they might demonstrate how to break down and build up a word like "w-all" or "tr-ee" (294/51-52) or how do this with more difficult words like "distinction" (294/31-32). Alan would not expect Andrew to try this independently (294/27-29), but believes that Andrew enjoys seeing how the components of words fit together and enjoys the sounds (294/21-22). Being strongly orientated to the phonetic aspect of words they encourage Andrew to try and work out simple words; Alan was delighted when Andrew grasped basic blends (295/54-56, 296/1-6);

"When Andrew got 'h-en' 'hen' ... that's the first time I'd seen him making sounds up into words ... that was quite a dramatic change ... it was the first time he was reading ... he was making a word, pronouncing the sounds ... and he realised what that word means."

Andrew is expected to focus on this kind of activity more in the future (303/51-52, 304/1-4). Meanwhile they encourage Andrew to use picture clues, something he does naturally; his parents think that where a picture does not give a very obvious clue to the word (292/50-53), Andrew is encouraged to try sounding; in such a case the word would be the "key" to the picture (293/7-10).

Andrew's parents are keen to help but feel that the teachers have the expert knowledge of teaching (300/5-8) and their experience helps them to meet individual needs and styles of learning (300/11-3). They have the whole day to teach (300/5) and the atmosphere within the school is sufficiently formal that the teacher can gain the child's attention and interest (299/36-41); within this framework the child is more inclined to concentrate than he is at home where he may be inclined to "play around" (300/50-55). Even so, the parents perceive that the way reading is presented at nursery is informal, an interest in reading being encouraged ready for a more instructional approach to identifying words (303/47-52). Alan feels that identifying words in isolation, free of any context, is important in reading (295/20-22, 296/12-15), and

though Andrew can do only very little of this as yet, they expect he will start to do so during his next year at school (304/1-6).

While the school has the expertise in teaching reading, Alan and Celia think they can make a very positive contribution by giving individual attention (300/39-45), especially useful if the parent knows how to help (297/6-8) and in making reading relevant to the outside world important things learned at school, for instance linking school learning with real life (299/30-33, 299/36-41, 299/43-47, 299/53-58).

The parents read aloud both books and environmental print for Andrew's pleasure and for its value in demonstrating the meaning and the sense of the printed word. Alan values reading in the "real world" highly, and whenever he has the opportunity will point out environmental print on traffic signs, street signs and in shops (305/11-15). He says some of the irregular words need to be learned by heart, and he would repeat them each time they see them (296/23-30). Other words can be sounded out and Alan would demonstrate this to Andrew (294/30-33). Environmental print in streets and shops is particularly useful in satisfying curiosity as to the function of print and in connecting the spoken and written word (295/42-46). Much of this would be at Andrew's request (295/42-46) and would be an opportunity for Andrew to concentrate, something he needs for learning (305/14-16).

Celia sees herself as somewhat inexperienced and is wary of causing confusion and having a detrimental effect if she uses unsuitable methods to teach reading (297/25-28). Alan agrees with her, but thinks that parents pointing to words as they read in a happy relaxed atmosphere can do no harm (297/29-36). If the child remembers any of the words that the parent has pointed to it will help (297/32-36), as will encouraging and reading aloud to the child which will keep interest alive (293/25-29). This interest along with the child's individuality is very important.

Psychology of participants

Andrew's parents recognise that children learn at different speeds and in different ways and these must be taken into account (300/11-13); they perceive that Andrew needs to be directed and encouraged to concentrate if he is to learn and make progress (305/14-16). He has been interested in books since he was a toddler and loves books now (better than toys) to the extent that he was recently upset when his friend said that he thought books were boring! (294/1-4) They feel that this enjoyment is an important motivational factor in the process of learning to read, but not sufficient for him to learn to read without a formal structure and teaching that the school can provide. They do not consider that he can read yet (294/8-9), but are not discouraged by this (295/42-51, 301/29-31, 303/47-52).

Social influences

Alan says he is not so much influenced by society but by what values he considers right for Andrew (301/6-12) e.g. Alan's concern for good English as an adult. Both Alan and Celia are particularly concerned about the ability to use English correctly (301/32-41) partly because they work with young adults, some of whom are very highly educated, whom they perceive as having very poor standards of English. They believe that grammar has never been taught in English (301/53-55, 302/49-55, 301/57-61), only through foreign languages; they feel the laying down of good habits in language can counter-act this (303/36-40).

They are influenced by the school's expectation of help, although there is a strong impression that Alan and Celia would use their own books with Andrew without this expectation.

Practical aspects

Alan and Celia have always bought Andrew many books (304/46-49) and he brings several school books home weekly. One of the reasons that the parents use the PACT book regularly is to help ensure a supply of books (299/25-26).

The parents have heavy work commitments, however there seems no shortage of time for Andrew to use books as his nanny is prepared to spend a lot of time reading with him; this has been the case since he was very young. Books are associated with "good" times with nanny and parents; around bedtime is regarded as a special time of the day to be spent with the parents and this is often spent reading books together (304/56-57, 305/1). As the only child in the family, Andrew has daily undivided attention and the parents enjoy the reading and convey a feeling of a particularly warm and loving atmosphere in connection with book reading. Andrew usually spends at least an hour a day in reading activities (293/33).

Celia and Alan believe that they can help more directly with learning to read by reinforcing what the school is teaching at all stages but need to know what method is used at school, what is correct teaching (297/16-18). They would like more specific instruction in this area to make their help more effective within the relaxed framework of home (299/6-13). The parents do receive written instructions from school from time to time, but though they may read these they do not think that they retain them, either mentally or physically (298/15-19). They use the PACT comment book actively but do not see this as specifically instructional, rather as a means to exchange ideas with the teacher, and for the teacher to reinforce parents' activities and make suggestions which the parents take up. They seem happy with this, at least for the time being (299/8-12).

Use of reading aloud

Andrew is not pressured by his parents to do more than he wants when he attempts to read aloud, although the parents may take opportunities to introduce the various components of words when they think Andrew will be interested.

In the recorded sessions Andrew used the books in two different ways that his parents described, according to the amount of text on the page.

Andrew had a simple, one line-to-a-page book and his mother engaged him in pointing out some of the words as he read each page:

Celia: What do you think that says?

Andrew: How do I ...

Celia: ... I ... that word?

Andrew: get

Celia: put

Andrew: put ...

Now Celia decides to demonstrate sounding out the word using letter names rather than sounds and Andrew identifies it

Celia: 'eye' 'tee' ...

Andrew: it on

Celia: That's right

Andrew: How do I put it on

Celia: Tell me all about this

.....

Celia does not expect Andrew to identify words, as the following extract demonstrates, and does supply the correct sentence;

Celia: That's right - and what do you think this is?

Andrew: How do I get my tee shirt on?

Celia: It says "This is my shirt"

Andrew: Do I put it on like this? No!

Celia: Which word says 'no'

Andrew: (Points correctly)

Celia: OK! What does this say? ... I put my shirt over my head

Andrew: ... over my head

Celia: Which word says 'over'?

Andrew: (Points incorrectly)

Celia: No - what does 'over' begin with? 'O-ver'

Andrew: 'O'

Celia: That's right. Which word says 'shirt' then? Sh ...

Andrew: (Points)

Celia: That one says 'head'. Which ones's 'shirt'?

Andrew: (Points incorrectly)

Celia: That's 'head'

Celia explains why she chooses words for him to point to;

"Well first of all you didn't get the sentence right, did you? You were just saying what you thought it said, weren't you? And I just wanted to pick out words in the sentence at random to see if you could really identify the words in the sentence ... So it's a way of seeing whether he's really reading it or if it's just memory. And mostly it's memory. Occasionally he'll point to a word and he'll know that word."

The parents' intention is that it will help him to recognise words and Alan adds:

" ... the object is to try and get him to read and it's habit ... he knows he has to look at the words as a key to see what's in the picture, the key to the story .."

The parents would only spend a little of the time asking Andrew to point to words as his concentration is limited; also, the amount of text on a page determines whether it is a suitable activity; as his mother says

"But I think you can only do this for a limited period of time, then they lose concentration and you have to have relatively few words in sentence. If you've got a paragraph you really can't do it."

In the next extract the parents encourage Andrew to give a totally free rendition of "Thomas the Tank Engine". Andrew "reads" the pictures in an interesting way, remembering the gist of the story and some of the unusual and characteristic words; he adds words according to his interpretation of the pictures. It is an interesting example of how Andrew enjoys the book, how he picks out salient phrases and adds his own sophisticated vocabulary; his mother only intervenes when asked for a word.

Celia: You're going to show me ...

Andrew: ... how much I can read. I'll see if I can, but I think I'm probably joking a bit.

With the turntable prominent, the text reads:

"At last Gordon was on the turntable. Edward was

uncoupled and he backed away. Gordon's driver and fireman jumped down to turn him round."

Andrew related:

"Then Henry was coupled onto Gordon and pushed him onto the turntable. He was about to jam as he had done before, but ..."

The next page shows the engine in the ditch and the text reads:

"He slithered and slipped off the rails, down the embankment and settled in the ditch. 'OOOOOsh!' he hissed. 'Get me out! Get me out!' he called.

Andrew relates:

"Oops! Off he went flying into the ditch."

Accompanying floodlights in the picture, the text says:

"But that evening the men brought floodlights. They used powerful jacks to lift Gordon and made a road of sleepers under his wheels to keep him out of the mud. Strong wire ropes were fastened to his back end and James and Henry, pulling hard, at last managed to bring Gordon back onto the rails"

Andrew relates:

"At night time there were powerful lights and the strong ropes, and Henry and James heaved a mighty heave and at last got him out."

This reading activity obviously brought great pleasure to Andrew and his parents.

Summary of home curriculum

Andrew enjoys a very rich and active reading curriculum at home using books, newspapers and environmental print, valued for the different uses they have, and used within a warm and relaxed atmosphere. His parents devote much time outside their working hours to Andrew and his books; the parents convey a feeling that reading times are very much enjoyed by all, and a special time to give Andrew undivided, loving attention. They are definite that the main factor in reading at the moment is Andrew's enjoyment of books.

Andrew's parents value a high level of literacy including

correct spelling and grammar for adult life and believe the foundations can be laid down with his early reading experiences. They think the more formal teaching will come next year from his reception class teacher meanwhile they are very keen for him to remember irregular words and use sounds to identify words in isolation, and although they do encourage him and try to teach him these skills, they use books in a flexible way encouraging freer interpretations.

Andrew at school

Andrew is one of the oldest children in the nursery class and ready to move into the reception class in a few months time; he is a cheerful confident boy, very easy to talk to. He likes playing either alone or in a group and enjoys books very much; his teacher describes him as a very keen reader who is getting on very well with reading.

Andrew is usually brought to school by his nanny, and at the time of the study was in the nursery full-time (all day, five days a week). Heather is the young teacher in charge of the nursery class and she holds a post of responsibility for language in the school. She is assisted by another teacher, a nursery nurse and at least one other nursery nurse in training.

Andrew goes to a large primary school which has been very thoroughly renovated. It is well maintained and attractive with high quality displays of children's work around the school. Often the displays are connected to a theme, for example "Book Week", when well known authors who have special relationships with the school give talks, tell stories and produce material. The school has a lively, friendly staff and highly organized staff meetings concerning school policy and developments take place frequently.

Teacher's beliefs and practices relating to literacy development

Heather, Andrew's teacher, believes that reading is a source of great pleasure and that in the nursery, pleasure and

meaning are the main factors in connection with books (307/5-8, 315/41-42). She therefore creates a relaxed environment where children can sit on cushions in the book corner to enjoy books almost whenever they chose (except when class activities take place). Andrew can often be seen in the book corner spending thirty minutes enjoying a pile of books (307/23-24). Heather believes that children will be encouraged and motivated to learn to read if they find reading pleasurable, and therefore is keen for children to be offered books as much as possible (307/35-37). She believes that the reading process begins with the realisation that pictures and print convey messages; children can become confident to use a book to gain meaning at the nursery stage (308/20-21, 309/57, 310/1-2). Confidence to begin reading can be nurtured by children being read to and gradually by attempting to read however much s/he is capable of reading (307/7-13).

The child reading to an adult is not very common in the nursery although it may happen; sometimes a child may take over the reading from an adult during a story-reading session; then any child may "read" a book aloud. By the child "reading" Heather means reciting a story which s/he has memorised by repeated readings with or without accurate correspondence to words, pictures or pages or without being able to identify words in isolation. Heather regards these activities as important early skills and satisfying signs that children have started to become readers (307/7-13).

Reading a prescribed piece of text to the teacher, identification of words or pressure to read "word-perfect" is not seen as appropriate in the nursery (307/7-10) though children who are capable and initiate the process themselves, would be encouraged to use any skills they have (including phonetic) to recognise or guess a word (307/7-9). Children may read to an adult or to another child or children if they wish, though Heather finds that the pressure is taken off individuals if a group reads together. Heather feels that children gain confidence where there is no pressure, and that

such confidence is the basis of later reading and accurate identification of words (307/12-13).

However, Heather is concerned that the lack of pressure may disable a child later on when s/he is expected to identify words (313/38-44). But she believes that her system is beneficial saying (313/44-46)

" ... reading, whereby we don't put any pressure on children, I think helps them at the early stages ... I don't know if that actually disables them when the time comes to sit down and go through the motions of ... words and having to get them correct ... but at the same time I feel it's a valuable confidence factor ... I'm prepared to let it be for the time being ..."

Andrew enjoys the teacher reading aloud to children or sharing reading whereby both teacher and children contribute some reading. If the print is large enough the teacher may point to it as she reads with the intention that the child will recognise some words and join in (307/38-39). This is important because although Heather says that the main purpose of using books in the nursery is for pleasure and confidence-building, she may involve children in word identification if they are ready to cope with it (307/51-57).

Heather believes that school has a special role in teaching reading in the nursery years. The shared experience of "exciting books" can be offered at school, and this is particularly important if there is not much help available at home. Heather sees her role as offering a wide variety of books and promoting an interest in reading in all aspects of the child's life, both at home and at school (311/51-58).

Heather is also concerned with starting the child on a smooth passage through the school which has well defined literacy policies; she does this by using similar methods and materials to the rest of the school (312/2-4, 312/12-24).

Heather sees the teacher's professional ideas as ever-changing, developing over time with professional courses, school and government policies and with different groups of

children and families (313/1-11). While she acknowledges her own professional expertise, her ideas about early reading necessarily involve children reading with parents at home; she sees home and school as a fusing of the interest in reading, rather than home reading as an extension of school reading or vice versa (311/40-49). To this end Heather has introduced the PACT reading system into the nursery, and both parents and teachers can gain experience of using books with children within the framework of the PACT scheme, parents can be encouraged to use books as they wish and teachers can help to allay any fears they may have about learning to read (309/24-38). Heather believes that all parents can help with reading if they wish to and if they have the time (308/49-57). She sees reading as an integral part of children's lives, its promotion needing not professional expertise, but everyday interest (308/52-55).

Parents are seen as a valuable resource who generally have more uninterrupted time than a teacher to read with children (311/47-49) plus vital knowledge of the child and says (308/49-52, 311/40-49)

" ... parents probably know children at our age much better than we actually know them, so their understanding of their children is much more in depth than ours can or will ever be, just as teachers ... they have a shared life and shared experiences to add to stories, to add interest, to make things more relevant to the child. They can pick opportune moments ... learning takes place when a child is interested."

With regard to Andrew's parents, Heather is pleased that a positive dialogue has developed through comments in the PACT notebook (308/60), a valuable vehicle for communication in this case, because the parents are not able to be in school very often because of work commitments (310/25-28). Her perception (based largely on the written communications) is that the parents spend a great deal of time on reading and she feels that Andrew has gained a great deal during the year from home reading (310/25-28). She regards his parent's approach to books as very flexible; apart from enjoying reading stories, they also appreciate Andrew's enjoyment of

books without words for which he can invent his own stories (315/10-17).

Psychology of participants

Heather's experience is that on entering the nursery (at about three and a half) different children will be at very different stages of literacy development which she must recognise and take into account (311/25-27, 311/30-33). Both they and their families will have different knowledge, expectations and needs for which the school will cater, Heather says

" ... a lot of the children who come in to us haven't had the experience ... they come in at a much lower level, and need the much more structured, simple books that allow them the confidence to pick up a book and within an hour 'I can read it'... we help them at whatever they introduce to us and take them on from there ... "

Heather's observations and experience show that children have different tastes in books and this may alter with the time and place and these factors should be taken into account when offering books and literacy experiences (310/54-56). Parents will also have different tastes and their own ideas about what constitutes suitable books (310/44-49, 314/47-49) and ideas about the developing reading process (310/35-40). These may differ from the school's ideas but should be taken into account (312/27-36); parents and teachers should strive to reach agreement on how their views can be joined to the child's benefit (312/29-36, 308/52-55). This presents no problems in Andrew's case as both he and his parents are keen on reading at home, they are perceived as being very helpful and Heather can easily cater for this family by developing the dialogue between them and sending home plenty of books which she knows will be used (310/1, 309/55-57, 314/19-21, 315/14-17).

Social factors

Although not obliged to, Heather does take into account school literacy policies which define the types of materials and teaching methods used (312/4-10). Heather's views coincide with school policy on parents as partners with views

to be acknowledged and taken into account; parents are also viewed as a valuable resource to be used effectively (312/18-23). The nursery familiarises children with materials and teaching methods used by the rest of the school (312/14-19, 312/11-17). These include phonics (usually verbal games) (312/18-23), 'Breakthrough' (312/14-19), books from the school's reading scheme and shared reading as appropriate.

The school's literacy policy includes the general valuing of books, participating in book clubs and book week (including making books) (312/9-12); the nursery includes these activities both because Heather agrees broadly with the principles and because she sees implementation of policies as a way to smooth transition into the infant school (312/2-5).

Parents and the cultural and community groups to which they belong also have their influence (312/46-48); the school tries to accommodate parental wishes when possible (312/59-64). With a large number of bilingual families, written materials and books in languages other than English are regarded as important and these are acquired, displayed and used as resources allow (312/52-59). The literacy expectations of different groups are also investigated and taken into account; in a school with such a wide social mix, some families will have very little knowledge of how to use books and how reading develops (309/26-36), while other families will have provided their children with a very rich literacy experience (309/50-51). Heather is concerned to find ways to help both groups of children and extend their use of books appropriately, allowing children to choose their books and talking informally to parents about their choices when the opportunity arises (316/3-9, 309/1-6, 310/15-18).

The school is very aware of developments in National curriculum and Heather examines the nursery's practices in view of this and makes changes and additions where appropriate (312/36-46). Heather says the Head, Advisors and Inspectorate shape ideas and practice (312/69-70, 313/1-3)

and courses, especially a higher degree course that Heather is taking, influences thinking gradually and sometimes indirectly (313/4-11, 313/23-27). These influences tie in with Heather's view that her professional expertise is ever-changing and developing - she sees scope for development and does not consider herself to have reached a stage where everything is "just right" (315/30-34).

Practical

The nursery has available a large collection of picture-story books, picture books without words, the early books belonging to the school reading scheme, very simple books with only one or a few words on each page and enlarged versions of favourite stories and nursery rhymes and observation). These may all be read aloud by an adult throughout the day, often at the child's request, or can be read by children if they wish. There is a lot of time available for reading (in comparison to infant classes); a child may spend an hour a day (from a two and a half hour session) with books, either alone or with an adult, if he or she chooses (307/16-18).

Apart from books, there are captions available on wall and table displays; occasionally a child was observed asking what a caption said or an adult observed pointing out a caption in the course of on-going work.

Despite these resources, Heather would like more high quality story books available for children to use at home and school, but finances do not allow this; although she is building up the book collection with allocated money there is not as much variety as Heather would like (311/6-11). And while to the observer, children seem to enjoy a high adult child ratio, Heather says there is still not always enough time to sit with individuals or small groups to do the reading she would like (315/38-41). Heather would also like non-teaching time available to make books to cater for the children who have little pre-nursery experience of books (309/40-51, 315/47-54).

Heather sees parents as an integral part of learning to read and has ideas about what she would like parents to do to help with reading; she sees her professional role as advising, negotiating and suggesting (not prescribing), within a partnership of parents and teachers when a need is perceived (308/52-57). Gaining confidence by using simple books at home, such that the child feels s/he can read the book, is what Heather expects and attempts to convey to parents (314/3-4, 311/34-35, 308/22-28); how they do it is left to them. She takes the lead from the parents and reviews their comments regularly. She does not consider herself to be directive in general (308/56-57), though if she found that comments were repetitive she might suggest something new to try at home (309/28-32, 309/43-46).

Heather believes communication to be of the greatest importance here, and most queries and problems can be rectified by improving communication. The teachers in the nursery achieve this by observing the child in the classroom, by personal, informal communications with the family and by using the PACT notebooks to develop a dialogue concerning individual needs and interests. The PACT scheme is instrumental in helping both parent and teacher to gain experience of using books to the child's advantage (309/26-28). Heather acknowledges that the nursery is advantaged in comparison to other classes and feels informal communication is important in the process of parents helping children in literacy learning (308/60-61, 309/1-6);

" ... I think communications are very important ...
We have such a good dialogue with our parents ...
we see our parents on a daily basis ..."

As well as being used to communicate ideas, the PACT notebook is a useful record for parents and teachers who can both use it to review progress over the months (309/36-39).

Use of reading aloud

Andrew was observed participating in a range of reading activities, either with a group or as an individual with great pleasure. He is obviously a boy who enjoys books

enormously, and more than once was observed spending more than half an hour in various reading activities in the book corner.

When Heather is with the children she concentrates on the meaning of the text by explaining it, asking questions about it and encouraging children to add comments and relate it to their own experiences. During observations there was nearly always an adult available to read with children if they wished, however if children preferred to use books alone or with other children, they were free to do so.

Andrew had spent some time reading books with a group then decided to read one of his favourites, "The Grand Old Duke of York", to a group of four children. He turned the pages fairly appropriately but recited with little written/spoken word correspondence. The general sense of the text was preserved. He was not interrupted by the teacher and not pressured to identify individual words or read more than he wanted.

Andrew: When they were up the hill ... and when they were only half way up ... they were half ... they were up ... when they were up ... when they were down ... when they were halfway up they were only ... were ... up nor down ... That's all the "Grand Old Duke of York"

Heather: That's the "Grand Old Duke of York" - do you want to read any others while you're here?

Andrew: Let's do these ones

Heather: Shall we look at these? Do you want to read them or shall I?

As Heather had said in the interview, the emphasis during the observations was on enjoyment and shared reading. Either the adult or the children will initiate comments, explanations or identification of individual words. In the following examples, Heather held the book so that the children could see it and pointed to the words. She allowed them time to supply the word if they could:

Heather: Big ... (points to word)

Children: aeroplane

Heather: Little ...

Andrew: bird

Earlier Heather accepted Andrew's inaccurate reading of the nursery rhyme, and although she values confidence in reading, she does not sacrifice accuracy in the case of the simple texts where she is pointing out the words as they are read. Where Andrew supplied an incorrect word, Heather supplied him with the correct one, pointing to the written form:

Heather: Big ...

Andrew: van

Heather: lorry ... that word says lorry ... Little ...

Unfortunately the opportunity to ask Heather why she had made this correction was lost - but clearly Heather sees a place for accurate identification of words at times.

Heather: (pointing to words)

Children: Big elephant, little mouse

In the next case, Andrew supplies a word and the other children "echo" or repeat after him

Heather: (pointing to words)

Andrew: Big building ...

Heather: Little ...

Andrew: house

Helen: house

Ruth: house

But more usually they echo Heather, as follows:

Heather: Big ...

Children: Big

Heather: (pointing - no response) ... ship

Heather: Little ...

Children: Boat

Heather: Big tree ...

Children: Big tree

Heather: Little

Children: flower

Heather usually gives them the opportunity to supply a word

by pointing and pausing; sometimes they join in the reading rather than her supplying the word

Heather: Big ...

Heather} Mountain
Children}

The impression is very much that teacher and child develop a rhythm and Heather gauges when they can supply a word and when they need her help; the process is carried out in a very relaxed and natural manner, each child contributing what s/he can and clearly enjoying the participation. Heather commented

"Everybody likes helping, don't they ... then if someone forgets a word, someone else can fill in a space"

Having read a book whose story was told in rhyming couplets and when children supplied the word at the end of most couplets, Heather commented on the importance of participation

"I like rhyming books, I think it really helps because it gives them a sense of finishing off and they're part of the story."

Heather read a longer story with more difficult text and concentrated on meaning by using the pictures, by asking children questions and by asking them to predict.

In one story it is not at first clear who the characters are, so Heather encourages the children to look at the picture and asks them a question to clarify the point. In the end they go to the text to find out the answer.

Heather: "Yes," says his mum, "While I'm out, Roger, you're in charge. Be good."

Heather: This must be his mum and his brother

Helen: That's his mum

Heather: Where's his brother

Helen: There ...

Andrew: No it's that one - that big fat one

Heather: It could be anyone, couldn't it?

Helen: No it's that one

Heather: Let's read this and see if it tells us

Heather involves them, keeps their interest and clarifies the text by asking them to find something in the picture as follows:

Heather: "What else is blue then," asked Roger (To children)
What is blue? Can you see anything?

Andrew: That and that and that

Heather: That's the jeans and the bin and the sky. I wonder,
let's have a look.

Heather checks their understanding of the text at the end of the story:

Heather: "Honestly Flo," said Mrs Soberman, "What have you
been doing? You're filthy!"

"She's been looking after us," said Nelson

"Bye," said Roger, "See you tomorrow."

Heather: Flo got into trouble, didn't she? Why?

Andrew: Because she got all ...

Children: ... dirty!

Heather: Yes, all dirty.

Heather also asks the children to predict what will happen, and this is dependent on their understanding of the story

Heather: "Oh no, it's a dragon. I'm not staying here."

(To children) What do you think he will do?

R: He'll run away

Helen: He'll have to climb over everything

In the classroom Andrew enjoys a range of literacy experiences which Heather intends to help him to learn to read and to enjoy books. When questioned he said he liked all the books that he was shown, and he liked both having them read and reading them himself. He had no preference for who read with him, whether at home or school, and he said he liked writing his name and other words but liked drawing better.

Summary of the school curriculum

The emphasis in the school curriculum is on pleasure in reading books and children are offered a variety of books

either to be read to them by an adult or for them to attempt to read what they can during book sharing activities.

Pressure to identify words is not put on them at all. Reading and writing activities will nearly always be the child's own choice and an important part of the day is the choosing of books to be taken home. Reading at home is felt by the teacher to be an essential part of the reading curriculum and she aims to work with parents to help children at home to gain enjoyment from books

Comparing home and school

At both home and school, reading at Andrew's age is valued for the pleasure it can bring; a relaxed and happy atmosphere where the child can choose books is the aim of both parents and teachers. Andrew takes advantages of the opportunities offered and he is very fond of books. Environmental print is apparently valued more in the home than in the school as being a way of showing that reading can be useful.

Both at home and school reading aloud sessions will be partly Andrew being read to and partly reading himself. But at school, it would be Andrew who chose to try and identify words and his teacher would accept his effort; at home his parents pick out words they think he might identify. They seem sometimes to be testing him, something his teacher would not do at school. However, his parents say they do not put pressure on him, in fact judging from the tape recorded session he can withstand slight pressure and continue reading in his own way. Heather acknowledges that Andrew will be required to read accurately further on in the school, and would probably regard his home activities involving identifying words as a preparation for this. She is likely to feel this is appropriate in Andrew's case as she admires the parents approach to books in general.

One of the most obvious differences between home and school is the ratio of adults to children; both situations have their advantages. At home Andrew has undivided attention from

an adult, at school, where he often reads as part of a small group, he contributes only what he wishes and relies on other children to contribute if he does not. This is considered by his teacher to be an advantage at his age and stage of reading, although it may not be for an older child needing individual help with identifying words.

There is harmony between the parents and the teacher; there is mutual approval for the approach each takes. The teacher considers she has a very good rapport with the parents and they believe they follow what the teacher asks them to do, namely help the child to enjoy books. The parents would like more instruction about how to help with words, although they do not ask for it specifically, and are not worried at the moment as they expect the more formal teaching will start in the next term.

According to Andrew, who is a very articulate boy, there are no problems for him in changing from the home to the school system (318/16-19); he says he likes reading at home and school (317/27-28) and he does not get muddled by his mummy asking him to sound words and sometimes likes doing that (318/11-13). He likes to read himself (318/2-3) and said he liked all the books shown to him including those without words (318/7-8). Neither parents nor teacher think that there are any difficulties for Andrew in transferring from a home to a school curriculum.

CASE 2

Helen at home

Helen is nearly four and lives with her professional parents and baby brother in a big, renovated house in a mixed area of London. She is a confident, very articulate girl, and the family enjoys activities together such as reading, swimming and socialising with family friends.

The development of reading at home

Helen's mother, Julia, works outside the home teaching children with special needs. At the time of the study, Julia

was on maternity leave and cared for Helen after the nursery session; usually Helen has a child-minder.

Julia says that she does not know how children learn to read, and that no single theory adequately explains the process. She implies that to learn to read, children probably need to see the relevance of reading and be motivated to read; the child will be helped if the family is seen to value reading and if s/he is able to hear and appreciate good stories. Children probably need to recognise whole words, understand initial sounds, spelling patterns and components of words (like "rain" in "train set") and connect visual and auditory groups of sounds and letters and use them as clues to the word. Guessing what makes sense is also a useful strategy. Julia says that Helen has some of these skills. At the moment she also uses her very acute memory of the text and recites books, often at great length, to friends or adults; neither Julia nor Helen considers this to be reading.

Julia implies that children are capable of learning and using a wide variety of strategies from an early age and that reading does not "just happen" given exposure to books. At the moment Julia is not especially keen to push on with reading; Helen and her mother prefer to enjoy the story and pictures of good quality books together. When an adult reads aloud, the child is helped to learn the basics of page turning, story structure, narrative style and conventions of written language; the child is motivated to read when his or her requests for stories are satisfied. Julia thinks there may be a slight disadvantage in reading the very sophisticated books that Helen likes in that she is not able to tackle them herself.

In Julia's opinion, in the nursery, the main job is to provide attractive books and help children to enjoy them in an physically attractive and relaxed environment. Julia is very concerned that the nursery does not have enough good quality books (although supplies have increased recently); she does not like the pre-reading scheme books that they use

and send home because they are trite and often meaningless.

She thinks the nursery has a vital role (if necessary) in helping parents to understand how to choose books, how to present, share and enjoy them with their children and the nursery needs enough quality books to do this. The nursery teacher has a role in teaching parents (if necessary) to use books at home; while Julia thinks the teacher's written information is well planned, she thinks that teachers could also demonstrate to parents how to choose and read books. As far as Helen is concerned, better provision for reading can be made at home as there is a superior supply of books available, there is more time for individual attention, the parents have a particular interest in their own child and reading is at Helen's request therefore there is always a positive environment. School, however, provides a valuable social environment for Helen.

Helen has enjoyed books since she was a baby and is very decisive about choosing books. She does not very often want to read the books she brings from school; her mother thinks that her own dislike of them may have affected Helen and thinks some of the "magic" of books may have been lost, but Helen normally enjoys stories at bedtime and other times of the day. Julia is concerned to gear literacy at home to Helen's needs and inclinations, and as Helen is very keen on writing and spelling words she will request this, and sets the pace.

Influences from outside the home are not relevant to Julia as she is confident about what she wants to offer to Helen; her knowledge and confidence come partly from her reading and training as a special needs teacher but mostly from her experience of her child; she is guided very much by Helen's requests.

Apart from books, the household provides varied environmental print for literacy e.g. newspapers, food packets and addresses on letters (all highly valued); there is usually

time available to read at Helen's request. The teacher is not directive about how to use the school books, but there is a PACT comments book in which a lively and controversial dialogue has developed regarding the disputed books. Julia thinks the teacher would give specific advice about helping reading if asked, having given advice on writing in the past.

Use of reading aloud

Helen likes poems and rhyming books (finding these easy to remember) and interactive books with pop-ups or moving parts. She enjoys listening to longer stories with few pictures and to picture story books.

There is no recorded session, but Julia describes shared reading sessions with a parent or adult visitor, using her own books. Helen will recognise some of the words or join in when the book has an appropriate amount of print; she will recite back after an adult reading, point to words occasionally (at her request) and describe the pictures minutely. Many of the school books are not suitable for this as they often have one or a few words on each page. If Helen chooses to read a book from school, they will spend five minutes, her mother reading it first (Julia says this is often half-hearted) and Helen reciting back.

Helen at school

Helen is in Andrew's nursery class so has similar literacy experiences. She appears a quiet and confident child in the classroom and enjoys the less boisterous activities such as house-play, using art materials, drawing and writing. She spends long periods in the book corner reading alone, in a group or sometimes with her mother.

The development of reading at school

Heather regards Helen as a very keen reader, advanced in early reading understanding. She says Helen has had richer literacy experiences at home than most children in her very mixed class, many of whom need to gain confidence in using books. She cater's for Helen by encouraging her to chose the

books she enjoys. Believing that the home has much to contribute to children's literacy, Heather is concerned that Helen often does not use the books she takes home from school.

Heather is aware of Julia's attitude to the school books and shares her belief that children deserve good quality books; she is gradually building up the stock as funds allow. Although some books in the nursery are not ideal, Heather would not offer any book that she felt to be unacceptable. Heather says that Helen usually enjoys the books they have in the classroom (and this was evident during observations and recorded sessions when Helen was seen smiling, joining in with the reading and anticipating what came next with pleasure). She regrets that Helen does not enjoy school books at home and that the parents are not more flexible towards them. She wonders if Julia has generated negative feelings in Helen, and is very keen to build a positive relationship with the parents by written comments and periodic discussions in order to resolve disagreements.

Reading aloud

Helen would not normally read aloud to an adult on her own (although she could if she chose to); most of her reading would be with a group and some of her shared experiences with Andrew have already been discussed previously.

Below is a recorded example of how Helen confidently shares and enjoys the reading with other children; Ruth (a confident reader) had chosen her favourite book and reads it as follows

Ruth: Bee, bee come to tea

Oh no spider, not me

Helen: (Laughs)

Ruth: ... (Pauses)

Helen: Caterpillar, caterpillar come to tea

Oh no spider, not me (Laughs)

The book continues in this way with Helen taking every opportunity to join in, saying excitedly at the end

"It won't go in, the spider will eat it!"

What is noticeable is that children have the opportunity to contribute words, phrases, passages and comments which Heather accepts quietly without any pressure on children to identify individual words or contribute more than they want.

Comparing home and school

Without having an example of Helen reading at home, it is difficult to make comparisons about her reading experiences. Though she may use different types of books in different settings, the interviews with both parent and teacher suggested that the initiative to read comes from Helen and there would be no pressure on her to contribute more than she wished. Asked which books from a selection she preferred, she indicated all types and also indicated the books that she liked to take home from school, saying that she liked to read them sometimes. She said she liked both her mother and teacher to read her stories and liked to read to them both sometimes. There seemed to be no confusions for Helen despite the adults' differences of opinion over books.

It was observed that school books were very much enjoyed by most children. Heather says some children take great pride in being able to "read" them, and that this confidence is very important for them. Heather is limited in providing the ideal number of books through lack of funds. In any case, she believes it important to use the pre-readers as an introduction to the schemes used later in the school. Julia thinks that using a scheme later in the school is not sufficient reason to use what she thinks are poor quality books in the nursery. She thinks the books are symbolic of a general underestimating of ability of some children and home provisions; she remarked that a record of books read at home could be an important part of the child's reading record, especially if school books were not used. There seems to be a clash between the parent's child rearing practices and intervention from the school.

Heather thinks that Helen is at present largely unaffected by this disagreement, knowing that she has plenty of books of

her own; however, she is slightly worried that Helen will feel negative about the reading scheme she will meet in her next class. Julia feels more negative about the situation saying that Helen has lost some of her enthusiasm for books through being exposed to the inferior school books (although she acknowledges she may be partly responsible as she finds it hard to disguise her feelings about the books). Heather would like to resolve the difficulty by working together with Julia. As both share the same opinion about what is important at the nursery stage for learner readers, that is enjoyment of good quality books and free choice in selecting them.

THE FIVE-YEAR-OLDS

CASE 3

Emma at home

Emma is five, the oldest daughter of professional parents, and has two sisters aged three (attending a private nursery school) and six months. They live in a large restored house in a relatively expensive part of London. Emma's mother works outside the home but recently has not worked so much as she has been caring for the new baby. The family has a live-out nanny three days a week who often transports Emma to and from school and who sometimes helps in school.

The family has an active social life and Emma takes part in after-school ballet lessons and occasionally has friends to tea, otherwise her after-school time is free. Emma is normally healthy, but suffers some hearing loss when she has a cold. She seems a rather quiet, introverted girl and her mother, Judith, says that she can be very determined and not easy to handle at times. Emma enjoys pencil and paper activities, and brings a book home from school regularly but does not like to read herself very much, though she enjoys having stories read to her by either of her parents.

Parental beliefs and practices relating to literacy development

Judith believes that reading is important and that the

ability to read eventually brings great pleasure from books and opens up the possibility of enriched communications. As communication partly involves reading environmental print Judith is pleased and encouraged that Emma is interested in such print, which has relevance for her. Judith encourages Emma's interest and makes an effort to point out words either at Emma's request or if she thinks they will be interesting, saying

"Well in a way it's sometimes more exciting for her to learn ... you say 'Look, how do we get out of here?' and it says 'WAY OUT' ... those sort of circumstances usually arise from her saying 'What does it say?' ... just odd words she's beginning to pick up and in a way it's more fun for her because she can see the use of written language then ... she can really understand why it helps ..."

Judith sees learning to read as the acquisition of a set of skills built up in stages that need to be learned gradually and practised regularly in order to reach competence. Emma will need to be able to recognise some words and sound others using both pictures and the context to give her clues. The child reading aloud helps to increase the reading vocabulary, and to put phonic rules into practice if the word is easy. Reading aloud gives the child the opportunity to put all skills together, and if Emma reads her own writing this will be more relevant. Emma sometimes does a little writing (copying what her parents write or asking for spellings) e.g. for a card or note she is sending.

Judith depends on the school reading scheme to provide Emma with a vocabulary, and provide material to teach and reinforce skills, with new words introduced gradually;

" ... if it's a school book ... I know it's a restricted vocabulary ... which follows on from the books she's had before"

Judith believes the home can help with reading, indeed is very influential, although family commitments limit the time for reading. She feels that it is essential that the home offers help

"with the pupil/teacher ratio as it is"

Judith believes that help at home is particularly important

where the individual child may be having difficulty in school; speaking of Emma's general unhappiness at school Judith says

"I think if you put her in another situation, another teaching situation, I don't know that I'd feel quite so much that our role was so important ..."

Judith thinks the home can encourage the child's interest and motivation in learning to read and can help to make reading relevant to the child within the limits of other family commitments. Judith is keen to use both books and environmental print to help Emma with reading. Her ideas about learning have changed with Emma starting to learn to read; she says she is no longer sure about her commitment to what she describes as a "child centred" approach to learning generally feeling that Emma needs a structure and very well defined guidelines as to what to do in her work, including literacy. However skills are not all that are important in planning a curriculum; the "child centred" element has an effect in that personality, inclinations and interest are taken into account.

Psychology of participants

Emma's personality, her tendency to give up with difficult tasks, her learning style and the need to get things right influence the amount her parents help her with identifying words and time they will spend on a book. Judith thinks motivation is important, and using Emma's own favourite books motivates Emma to read; therefore Emma's own taste in books is taken into account and her mother is willing to substitute the school scheme with appropriate books from home. Judith's own psychological state probably has an effect. While Judith employs a number of appropriate strategies at different times for identifying words and is thoughtful in that she can explain why she does so (demonstrated later), still her confidence in her ability as a teacher is uncertain. During the recorded session there was the impression that she was conveying this uncertainty to Emma.

Jenny does not compare Emma's progress with that of other

children. She realises that children have different abilities and learn at different rates; Judith has no particular goals for Emma at any given time. However, she does feel that Emma should be making progress and as long as she can see some (e.g. progressing slowly through the scheme) she is reasonably satisfied. She is aware of individual differences in being able to make use of word identification strategies, saying Emma's younger sister is more adept at using sounds than Emma is. However, she thinks phonic skills are useful to have and encourages Emma to use them without insisting; there are other ways of helping for the time being.

Emma's changing feelings about reading are important. Judith says Emma was much more interested in books and reading her own writing in the nursery, but is not so keen now that she associates reading and writing with work rather than fun. Emma enjoys being read to and this helps Emma by motivating her to want to read for herself and by satisfying her interest in stories and what things say. Feeling this motivation to be important, the parents read to Emma as much as possible; the choice of books will be Emma's or her younger sister's.

Social influences

While reading is to some extent Emma's choice, the school's expectation that parents will help and the fact that books are sent home influences how much Emma reads at home. This is a subtle pressure that the family feels, being well aware of the shortage of teacher-time in school for all the necessary practice and reinforcement in reading. The parents sympathise with the problems that schools in the borough face in general in recruiting and keeping staff, and understand the necessity of involving parents.

In a general way, reading as a means of communicating with peers and adults in her social setting (the educated, well-informed middle class), being a part of a literate social group, are factors of which the parents and, to some extent Emma, are aware; this provides an incentive for Emma to learn

to read. Speaking of visits to exhibitions her mother says

"If she could read things while she was there , then maybe tell people about them ... but I'm not really meaning quite so serious as that ... just the ability to communicate with other people really, either of her own age or not, seems to me really helpful if you can read and write."

Practical aspects

The parents have the time to do some reading with Emma, but with two younger children and Emma's after school activities (which are valued by the family as an important part of Emma's enjoyment and development) time is limited. They use environmental print and books imaginatively and flexibly. Reading scheme books from school are available and so are plenty of story books belonging to the family, including some books that were listed in a Sunday paper with grades of reading level attached; these are used alongside the school scheme either as Emma's choice or at her parents' suggestions.

Judith feels that, as the school needs help from home, guidance on helping is needed from the school. But she feels that the instructions she has from school are general and not helpful; she would like guidance on how to achieve what the school asks parents to do, namely help children to enjoy books, hear them read books provided by school and give help with learning words. She feels she would be happy to be complimenting what the school is teaching and would like to do more but does not understand the teacher's aims and methods and needs more information on this. Judith thinks of her own ideas to help, but she sees herself as a novice with an "outside, amateur point of view" saying

"I think you do learn as you go along, with (the second child) I'll probably be a bit more confident"

To help, the parents need to be given guidance in the technical aspects from the experts (i.e. the teachers). Judith implies that the teachers have the specialist knowledge and that the school has a sound approach to teaching reading,

" ... the school's general approach was outlined ... they were going to adopt a particular scheme, that they can incorporate two schemes ... all that makes sense and sounds good ... it accommodates each particular kind of interest ... all of that sounded fine ... "

Reading aloud at home

Generally, Emma hears stories with her sister and Emma enjoys this shared experience, but her reading aloud sessions are usually alone with one of her parents. Judith says Emma would be helped with difficult words when reading aloud by being asked the initial sound of a word and being asked to look at the picture and guess. Her mother may tell her the word or sound it out for her.

Emma may be urged to finish her book; if Emma is finding it difficult because of the book itself or because of Emma's mood or lack of energy, her mother may help a lot with difficult words by supplying them or finish reading the book to Emma for the sake of getting through it and giving Emma some sense of achievement. If Emma is reading her scheme book, her mother may supply words then ask Emma to identify the words at the end; Judith may urge Emma to finish a school scheme as she is aware that Emma has met certain words previously and relies on the structure of the book and building up of a controlled vocabulary for Emma to make progress. She says

" ... if it's a school book ... I know it's a restricted vocabulary which follows on from the books she's had before. We try to do every word ... I can see there's a pattern developed according to their skill at that stage ... it seems more sensible to get her to try and remember 'but' because we've had it earlier on in the book"

Judith acknowledges that Emma does not like work nor does she particularly enjoy the scheme books, finding some of them too long or with too many new words. She may substitute a book that Emma knows well either having had it read to her or having read it herself before. This was the case with the first book in a session that was recorded at home, excerpts of which are presented below. The second book was part of the

school scheme.

Judith helped with difficult words and was able to say in some cases after the reading session why she chose to help in a particular way.

E: Peace at ...

J: Shall I point and fill in the words you don't know? ...

E: No, I can read this

J: You'd rather do this one?

E: I'm looking at this ... see if there's any here

J: I think you'll remember them in this book, because you know this story quite, well don't you?

E: The house ...

Judith used a prompt and pointed out a visual similarity

J: That's very similar to house, isn't it ... but what ...

E: Home!

Judith provided the word

J: Hour ...

E: The hour was late

She praises Emma periodically, either when she reads a chunk fluently or identifies a word correctly after an incorrect response.

J: Right! Now let's ...

E: Mr Bear was tired, Mrs Bear was tired and Baby Bear was tired. So they all went to bed. (Laughs with enjoyment)

J: Well done!

E: Mrs Bear fell asleep, Mr Bear didn't. Mrs Bear ...

Judith provided the word

J: began ...

She explained

"I didn't think Emma would have met it many times before and wouldn't be able to sound it"

E: ... began to snore

J: Well done

E: Er ...

J: It's the same as that, isn't it? (word prompt)

E: Snore (pointing to speech bubble in picture)

Judith allows Emma to interrupt the flow to embellish the story and encourages her to get enjoyment from it.

J: She makes some noises at this point, doesn't she?

E: (Makes snoring noises)

J: That's right, so it says 'snore, snore, snore' ... we make the noises you see

....

E: I can't ... snore...

J: Stand ... I can't stand ... (provides)

E: I can't stand it ...

J: No - this ... (negative feedback and provide)

E: this ... said

She points out a similarity and helps with the initial letter, but supplies the word when Emma does not respond.

J: No, it begins with a "s" but it's a little word ... so ...

E: So he got up and went to baby ...

Judith asks a question (comprehension) to draw attention to the context and prompt Emma to give suitable word.

J: There's two words before baby ... What does he do in the bed? What does he try to do in the bed?

E: Sleep ...

J: That's right..

E: Baby bear ...

J: In ...

E: ... (No response)

Seeing that Emma is struggling and perhaps losing the meaning, Judith suggests recapping

J: So shall I read from the beginning of the sentence for you?

Emma is now ready to give up, having read some passages fluently; she is now struggling and becomes disheartened.

E: I want to read this one

J: OK ... are you going to do it or do you want me to read it first?

E: You read it first

After her mother reads the short book Emma attempts it herself.

E: Benjamin lived in a house. The ...

Judith provides some words

J: In ...

E: In ... in a ... in a ...

J: wood ... That's a new word

E: wood ... It was ...

J: That's right

E: a ... little house ...

Judith gives a word prompt where the miscue is semantically similar;

J: Nearly ... it means the same

E: Small house

J: That's right, well done

...

E: Trees

J: Nearly, what are lots of trees called? (comprehension)

E: Tr ...

J: Beginning with 'w' ... (phonetic analysis)

E: ... (No response)

J: The wood (provides)

The extracts demonstrate some of what Judith says about the way she helps Emma identify unknown words; the help will vary according to whether she thinks the word is unusual and infrequent, easy to sound or has a sound or spelling pattern similar to a known word. Judith thinks that sounding is not always very helpful to Emma; instead she may ask her to guess, using the meaning of the sentence.

Judith is using a number of strategies appropriately, however, Emma does not appear always to make use of the

strategies her mother suggests, perhaps because of her general lack of confidence in her abilities. Regarding the question of encouraging Emma to be more persistent with a school book, this is not evident during the recorded session; however, it was an isolated recording, a fairly difficult school book and Emma was not feeling very well on that particular day.

Summary of home curriculum

The parents (particularly the mother) spend time helping Emma at home although their time is stretched with various family and work commitments. Judith is very concerned with Emma building up reading skills gradually and has plenty of sound ideas about helping, but is not confident about using them. Much of home curriculum is driven by the school's expectation of parental help. Judith feels she should compensate for the school's shortcomings, one of which is the relationship between Emma and her teacher, otherwise she doubts if she would feel the need to help so much. Judith feels strongly that more guidance from the school is needed, indeed that parents are entitled to it if they are expected to help.

Emma's mother feels that environmental reading is important and as Emma sees the point of it is keen to encourage it. Emma is not as keen as she used to be on writing and is not keen on reading herself, finding it hard work; she likes to get things right and tends to give up easily; her mother does not pressure her to carry on. Emma often has the opportunity to substitute the scheme book with a suitable book of her own to read. Emma likes to hear stories read aloud and as her mother thinks this is an important way to motivate Emma, the parents read aloud whenever they can. She would often share a story time with her younger sister but when she reads aloud herself the times are usually arranged so that Emma will be undisturbed.

Emma at school

Emma is in a reception class of 30 which includes a group of very lively boys; children enter the class three times a year

from the nursery. Emma appears a rather fretful child who, according to her teacher, has not completely settled in the reception class after nine months. Emma is not always happy to be left in the morning, and sometimes was seen to be quite fretful and clinging; occasionally Emma was seen watching other children in the class, particularly some of the more boisterous members, with a somewhat bewildered expression, but these occasions did not seem to bother her unduly. Both teacher and mother say that Emma does not like working; however, observations showed that she did tackle her reading, writing, maths, science and art tasks on different occasions with a reasonably positive attitude. She seemed willing to participate in the study and talked fairly easily. Emma's teacher is Diana who is a mature and very experienced teacher who has returned to teaching after a break.

Teacher's beliefs and practices relating to literacy development

Diana believes that reading is of great importance, she values it for the pleasure that can be obtained from books and thinks that reading is fundamental to much of school life being the key to all other school work and essential to the child's adult future. For her, teaching reading would have priority if choices had to be made between other areas of the curriculum. She believes that learning to read is a matter of connecting the printed form with a particular meaning. She views the development of reading as a pyramid of skills, with a solid foundation to be built on over time with the learning of more skills and practice. Diana considers visual patterns more important than auditory features for identifying words, and the child must learn to recognise these, saying

"I work strongly on the basis that ... visual aids as much as possible ... and I do a lot of this business of the same vowels, when it arises ... we have 'at' and I put 'f' in front and 'b' in front, which is visual rather than auditory"

She believes a child reading aloud helps reading by promoting enjoyment and by giving an opportunity to reinforce words by actually articulating them. Reading aloud is also an opportunity for progress to be checked, accurate

identification of words being an important indicator of progress.

Emma particularly enjoys stories being read to her, and her teacher, Diana, clearly enjoys reading stories. If the size of the print allows, Diana will point to the words as she reads aloud both to emphasise their visual shape and to make the connection between the spoken and written word; this will help the children's reading. When reading aloud, Diana may also draw attention to the visual aspects of words by pointing them out in a caption, notice, the child's current work or in words in isolation. Occasionally she devises exercises or writes a note in a child's PACT record book to draw attention to the visual aspects of print.

Diana attaches such importance to building up reading little by little on a solid foundation, that she spends a great part of the school day on structured reading activities.

Diana sees the teacher as the person mainly responsible for teaching reading, using her knowledge and experience of the process of reading saying;

"Apart from any skills of teaching ... one hopes that any stratagems that one's learned over the years will be useful ..."

She sees practice as leading to increased ability to read competently, and thinks much of the practice and reinforcement can be done outside the classroom, at home with the parents. Having read their books at home, Diana says;

"Then they come back ...and until they can reasonably read a book I don't want to put them onto the next one. It's a pyramid, isn't it?"

She regards reading to the teacher as an opportunity for children to demonstrate their skills (of which they can be proud) and pass a little test (officially advance to the next stage); she believes reading to the teacher has a different psychological effect to reading to the parents.

Diana believes there is a place for parents helping with reading in the home; this is linked with her own shortage of

quiet time in which to hear children read. The child's progress is dependent on how frequently s/he practices with the parents. In Emma's case the book may have been taken home and brought back but little reading may have been done by her. Diana urges Emma to read at home but says she would never put pressure on families preferring to leave the decision whether to help to them - she does not normally make a point of asking individual parents to help with reading. Diana does not simply view parents as a mechanism to provide the time that is unavailable in school for hearing reading; she credits parents with considerable knowledge of the reading process assuming they do about the same as she does to help with difficult words and expects them to help children get words correct.

She believes that most parents understand and support her aims and add their own ideas for helping and is satisfied with how they help. So committed is she to the principle that parents can help their children's reading and accelerate their progress that she says it is noticeable if children have not read at home; they are not so eager to "show off" their skills to the teacher and demonstrate progress ready for the next stage.

Psychology of participants

Diana believes that all children will learn to read differently, but a necessary element in learning is motivation, and an interest in books and stories will motivate a child to want to read for himself or herself. She encourages children to develop their interest in books by reading books to them in a daily story time and by encouraging their interest in books in their own reading aloud sessions.

Diana recognises that individual differences in the child's ability and personality (which affect the child's attitude to reading) are important and to be taken into account; these will affect the speed with which s/he will learn to read. She likes children to go at their own pace and is aware that Emma

does not like working (including reading). Diana is reasonably satisfied with her progress given that Emma has not settled down very well, is not very happy and "doesn't want to work, full stop! "

She accepts what Emma will do and does not push her to do more at school nor does she pressure her parents to help more.

Social influences

Diana has a vague concern for the child's adult future, in that she sees it as fundamental that children will become competent readers but this does not seem to have a specific influence. She is influenced by the school's general commitment to involving parents in children's learning; Diana thinks this help is necessary and most parents co-operate.

She realises that children have different opportunities to be helped at home because of family circumstances and time available and this will affect progress; she takes this into account, compensating with more teaching;

" ... it's very noticeable taking those that I mentioned ... who are not heard at home ... it's very noticeable, their reading skill ... they need to be taught ... and ideally one would hear them again the next day, but there's limits on the same passage ... "

The school policy gives high priority to literacy and has a core literacy scheme which Diana is expected to use; the structure of the reading schemes (old words repeated and new words introduced gradually in increasingly difficult texts) determines how a teacher approaches reading; in any case, the schemes suit her view of learning to read as a pyramid of skills.

Practical aspects

The school provides three basic literacy schemes ('Ginn', 'One, two three and away' and 'Breakthrough to literacy'); these form the core of reading and writing work. A lot of early writing and reading is done with the aid of the

"Breakthrough" sentence making kit, consisting of single word cards put together to make sentences of the child's choice or the teacher's suggestion. Emma copies the sentence into her book, illustrates it, reads it aloud and uses the words as a personal dictionary. Diana attaches great importance to this scheme and likes the children to be able to read the words in their folders without adding too many new ones in line with her "pyramid" view of reading. (Emma's mother says Emma "loathes" this and certainly observations demonstrated that Emma did the work of producing sentences without any particular relish). Emma can spell some words for herself and produce and read a short sentence. It may be that she finds this kind of writing more stimulating than the sentence maker and is ready to move on with her group as Diana plans.

There are sufficient books belonging to the reading scheme in the classroom to send home one book at the children's current reading level. But there is a shortage of books that the children could read alone to supplement the scheme, and Diana would like more when more funds become available. There are plenty of story books for the teacher to read aloud, including some with large print.

Time to teach reading, and especially to hear children read aloud with 30 in a class, is limited and therefore Diana may not hear children read as often as she would like and she relies on classroom helpers to listen. She aims at three times per week; if a child has not brought his/her book back there may be no appropriate book for the child to read from, so s/he may not read on every planned occasion. Sometimes other commitments in school time like outings or preparations for class assemblies may limit the amount of reading that can be done. These constraints on her time mean that Diana depends on parent's time at home for hearing reading. However, she gives little specific advice to them about how to hear reading, leaving it up to them. Parents are invited to help at home in introductory meetings at the beginning of the reception year and are asked to help children to enjoy books and hear them read, and she invites parents to come to

her with difficulties or for general advice if they wish. This is the chief way that the school's ideas about parental help are communicated. She would like subsequent meetings held earlier in the term so that there is more time to put any decisions arising from them into action.

If parents came for advice Diana might give them specific tips, and if they came with complaints she would try to resolve the problem. She has pointed out to an "over-eager" parent whom she considered had unrealistic expectations of the child's reading that a child might turn against reading in such a situation. Diana does not see all enthusiastic parents as "over-eager". In fact she encourages parents to push on, for example welcoming them providing extra books at a suitable level and encouraging a nursery child to take home books from the scheme in the term previous to starting in reception. She is obviously open to approaches but with regard to Emma, although she might talk to her mother occasionally, she did not mention that she discussed in great depth any difficulties that Emma might have, though she would probably respond if the parent initiated a discussion.

Many children are very dependent on adult help and guidance for much of their work and this limits the quality of the time the teacher can devote to hearing children read aloud in uninterrupted surroundings. Parents, Diana thinks, can give uninterrupted time to hearing children at home.

The space in the classroom is used to advantage; the room is attractive with displays of children's work and there is space in the classroom at eye level for captions etc. which Diana encourages children to read when talking about relevant topics. There is the usual supply of different books in which to write and make dictionaries. Diana makes use of all of the space and materials so that reading is not an isolated experience but comes into all activities at all times of the day.

Reading aloud at school

Diana sometimes does a reading exercise with her class, for instance supplying or guessing the written word when letters are missing as in "h--se" in relation to a picture and children will read this. There is an occasional session when the class work on sounds in the context of a book, looking at a very large book, hearing the story and then looking for words containing certain sounds.

Reading aloud from a scheme book does form an important part of Diana's teaching, and correct identification of words is expected as a part of monitoring progress. Diana says she helps by asking the child to sound the word or the initial sound, by sounding the word herself or telling the word; this would apply to teaching new words or reinforcing old ones

"If it was a child in the earlier stages, where you felt it was important for them to read a particular word I'd help them build it up or use some stratagem to try and teach the word."

The example below of Emma reading to Diana in a recorded reading session demonstrates how Diana uses a scheme book in a number of ways. She checks progress and promotes enjoyment by encouraging Emma to talk about the book by relating it to her own life and adding comments as she reads. In some cases she was able to explain why she chose to help in a particular way. The excerpts are quoted at some length because they show how the adult handles a major component of learning to read and how the child responds to it.

It was taken for granted that Emma would read a prescribed amount of text decided by the teacher and she read willingly from a book with which she was already familiar having read it before; she enjoyed this and added her own comments and embellishments to it, which Diana approved. In reading to her teacher she was expected to read every word - Diana followed the text with a pointer and if Emma did not identify the word correctly her teacher gave her a non-verbal signal which Emma understood (pointed at the word and did not move on) and then Emma made another attempt.

E: Get ... (Diana does not move the pointer - non-verbal

negative feedback) Can ... I go for a ride?

D: Good!

PC: Why did Diana point, Emma?

E: To tell me to look again

PC: Did that help you?

E: Yes, I thought again

After a self-correction Emma did not make a response to identify the word, so Diana helped by prompting with the initial sound:

E: Can I go for ... out to ...

D: p ... (phonic analysis)

E: play mum?

D: Good

PC: Emma, how did Diana help you then?

E: She said 'p' and I remembered play

Another time she asks Emma the first sound:

E: Stop! ...

D: What's the first sound? (phonic analysis)

E: 'd' and it's got 'o'

Diana then decided to provide the word when she thought the sound would not help:

D: That word is 'Don't'

She explained this afterwards by saying:

"I didn't think she was going to get it ... we could have done this ... (covers part of the word) ... and perhaps got 'do' but then you've got to change the sound to 'doh'. She didn't know it and I don't think she was going to get it. Do you know what that word is now?"

E: Don't

Within the context of the book and as the opportunity arose, Diana reinforced the word by pointing out 'don't' with a lower case 'd' and wrote it in Emma's record book for future reference:

D: Do you know what this word is?

E: Is that 'don't' as well?

D: This has a capital, this has a little 'd'. I use the back

of the book to show words ...

Where Emma hesitated at the beginning of a phrase Diana helped her by asking a comprehension question:

E: Help! Stop us! ...

D: And what does he say?

E: Look out!

Emma was enjoying the pictures and embellishing the story with comments and Diana approved this by commenting on the pictures; but she controlled the pace by commenting and moving Emma on;

E: "Stop!" And then they go crash and he falls over and goes bang, bang, crash. I'd smack his bum! (Laughs)

D: He looks cross. What does the policeman say?

Diana praised Emma's efforts as she went along, either when she read two or three sentences fluently or made a correction. She used a number of strategies, was not solely dependent on the visual aspects as might be expected from the interview. Asked about whether she liked the book compared to books she had at home, Emma said that she did like both. Asked about who she liked to help her with reading, she said that she sometimes liked her mummy and sometimes liked Diana to help. Emma finished the book with apparent satisfaction.

Summary of school curriculum

Diana offers a wide variety of materials for early reading and writing and Emma uses them at different times during the week. Diana uses literacy schemes to build up a "pyramid" of skills with the belief that a strong base is a very important prerequisite to adding new skills. Apart from a skills orientation, Diana takes into consideration an individual's personal and social situation when planning and delivering a curriculum and accepts what a child can do given his or her circumstances. Emma is not happily settled at school yet, although Diana is reasonably satisfied with her progress in reading.

Hearing Emma read she used the session to teach and reinforce words using different word identification strategies and spent time encouraging her to enjoy the book and pictures and add comments.

Diana finds that the numbers in the class and the dependence of some children a constraint and finds it difficult to spend the time she would like on reading, particularly on reading aloud which she thinks very important. While Diana has some help in the classroom, she depends on parental help with reading at home in carrying out her full school curriculum. Yet she does not give parents much guidance with helping children to read unless they ask specifically - it seems she thinks this would be putting undue pressure on them.

Comparing home and school

Emma appears to be a child who needs to gain confidence and practice with books she enjoys, probably reading many at the same level without being pushed on too fast and both Diana and Judith gave her the opportunity to read familiar books. Both parent and teacher have similar views about the pleasure that reading will bring as well as its usefulness and see learning to read as the acquisition of a set of skills to be built up gradually, with each stage consolidated before further vocabulary is added. Parent and teacher use the book as a vehicle to teach and practice skills as well as using the book as a context for enjoyment and to get general meaning about the story. Both encourage a variety of strategies to identify a word in any one reading session, and judge whether Emma should be able to identify any particular word as it occurs. Emma's ability and particular personality are seen by parent and teacher as factors to consider in planning for her.

Despite other family commitments, Judith sets aside a number of regular reading aloud sessions at home alone with Emma which amount to at least as much and probably more time than she would get at school with her teacher. The quality of the time also differs in that at home the reading session would

normally be peaceful; although a lot of the story times and times for reading environmental print are necessarily shared with her sister, the parents do arrange a special time alone with Emma without interruptions

"... there's always one time when we'll either do her school book or a story that she's particularly chosen ..."

The recorded session at school was interrupted at least twice by other children, (an almost inevitable consequence of being one of thirty in a reception class) even though the teacher had asked children to appeal to the other adult present in the room at the time. However Emma coped with the interruptions and carried on reading.

Where there is another difference is in the amount of text that Emma is expected to read. Diana seemed to control how much Emma would read whereas Judith allowed Emma to decide. Judith puts considerable effort in to helping Emma get through a whole book or portion (for the sake of a sense of achievement for Emma) and supplements the school books with carefully chosen books belonging to the family. The recorded session shows that Emma can read chunks of text but wants to give up when she starts to experience difficulties, and in the session this is what she did. Diana helps Emma complete a book, apparently taking it for granted that Emma will read a certain prescribed amount.

Diana and Judith both agree that any instructions from school about how to help are very general, being limited to helping children enjoy books, hearing them read and helping them learn words. However Judith does a number of things on her own initiative for instance teaches sounds, helps Emma build up words, think about the meaning of the sentence and story to help identify words. One would imagine that this was the excellent cooperation between home and school, yet while both Diana and Judith are reasonably satisfied that Emma is making some progress, Judith is very dissatisfied with the school situation in general and the reading situation in particular. Judith is unhappy that Emma is miserable about school because she does not get on with her teacher particularly well and

finds a large and boisterous class difficult to cope with. With regard to conflict between the home and school curricula, Judith implies that there is a basic home/school conflict and this affects Emma's attitude to work, including reading. And while Judith herself has very definite views about the value and importance of reading and employs similar methods to the teacher in helping Emma to identify words and read the book, she feels very unsure of her abilities and that what she is doing is helping Emma. She would like much more help and needs some reassurance about what she is doing. This seems to be where the difficulty lies; the teacher interprets Emma's unhappiness as failure to settle and "not liking work, full stop", but is reasonably satisfied with Emma's progress. Diana perceives no conflict between the home and school curricula; she perceives the home as a helpful, supportive one in terms of helping with reading, and accepts it as such without expressing any desire or necessity to ask anything more of the family. She would give specific advice if it was requested.

Judith feels that she is a valuable resource that could be used, indeed must be used, as there is not enough teacher time to help children with reading. She feels that instruction is needed, but is not willing to go and ask for it except to have the vaguest conversations about Emma; nor is she willing to ask to discuss Emma's general unhappiness with the teacher as she does not want to make a fuss and appear to be "precious" about her daughter; Emma's father thinks she has to learn to cope with many situations in life including the present one in school. Judith says that Emma does not feel very positive about either her teacher or the classroom situation, and that Emma needs to feel positively about one of these aspects in school to be able to make progress. Judith tries to compensate at home by offering a firm atmosphere in which to practice reading, but says she thinks she may be over-firm which does not help Emma to feel happier about reading.

Emma meanwhile does not seem to be affected by the two

different curricula. When asked she said she was not confused over what her parents and teacher ask her to do, she can tell her mother whether her teacher gives letter names or sounds and the mother accepts whatever she says, and Emma does not admit to preferring either teacher or parent hearing her read, nor does she express any preference for the kind of help that either give her with difficult words and she liked some of the books from school and home. It seems that it is the mother rather than Emma that is unhappy about the reading system and is unsure about her own abilities to help. Judith's discontent with reading may be reflection of discontent in general over Emma's unhappiness.

There are basic problems of communication that might be tackled if both the teacher and the parent were more direct, if the teacher was more welcoming of parents seeking help and the parent more willing to ask for it. With reading, the teacher could perhaps make more definite comments in a record book or expect more specific rather than vague help from parents. Judith might improve matters by being more direct with the teacher, asking her advise or asking for confirmation that she is doing helpful things with Emma. This could be done by having a system of demonstrating reading aloud and how to help, prescribed tasks and a system of communications asking parents and teacher to note difficulties and successes in a book and reviewing it on a regular basis.

CASE 4

Maria at home

Maria is five and lives with her professional parents and nine year old brother in a small, select modern housing development in a relatively expensive renovated area of London. Both parents work outside the home and her mother's job sometimes takes her abroad for a few weeks at a time. The family has a second language (English being the first) and the mother is keen for the children to speak and eventually read and write in it.

Maria is a lively, confident child at home; she likes books and enjoys many family outings and visits to cultural events which often give rise to lively discussions in the family. There is a relaxed atmosphere at home and the two children are encouraged to work at their own pace.

The development of reading at home

Maria belongs to a family that values reading for the pleasures it can bring. Her mother, Lucy, sees early reading as a series of skills involving recognition of whole words and auditory and visual spelling patterns within a context, the pictures being an essential part of the context for beginning readers. Lucy believes that children learn to read by fitting sounds to the shape and sense of a word and may experiment with guesses, judging what is sensible in relation to the context, whether that context is a book or a particular item in the environment. Lucy believes that reading aloud gives Maria the opportunity to practice these skills, increase reading vocabulary and gain confidence.

Home can provide an atmosphere such that the child's interest, enjoyment and confidence can be fostered. However, the school has the main role in teaching reading and offers professional and technical expertise which the parent is not able to offer; it also offers peers who can enjoy the same activities. School provides a system which imposes a structure and discipline (which the home cannot replicate) at the same time as making learning to read fun.

One of Lucy's reasons for giving help is because she thinks the teacher cannot always give the individual attention necessary; also reading aloud is apparently a source of pleasure in this family which helps to motivate the child to read for herself.

Much of what Lucy does is at Maria's request using materials of interest to her, interest being important for motivation and confidence. Lucy thinks that over-correction of any kind (including in speech) and pressure to progress can become a

burden on a child and can destroy confidence and she wants to support and help her children without pressure.

Lucy acknowledges that she has an advantage over other parents in that she has not had any worries over reading progress as she has seen her older child go through the school and do well.

Maria can see that she is progressing (through the various levels with the scheme books which she does not like); this will enable her to read more dramatic books and this pleases her. Being easy-going she treats the scheme books as homework, as a challenge and chooses her own books to read aloud herself for pleasure.

Maria's mother is affected by the school policy of involving parents and sending books home for reading; she uses the school books to hear Maria read aloud though there are plenty of suitable books in the home.

Other parents also have their influence; they act as a general support with whom she can exchange ideas and notes about materials and progress, but also serve as a warning not to pressure Emma when she sees other children suffering from pressure. However, there has been social pressure from peers who at one point made Maria feel that she was not reading as well as they were. Believing that Maria could perhaps do more, Lucy did start to hear Maria more regularly and feels that the child has progressed rapidly just recently as a result.

The parents usually have time to help with reading; most days, Maria will spend fifteen or twenty minutes a day reading or looking at books and much of this is reading aloud either from a book or from the environment and Lucy tries to be accommodating and listen.

Maria has the opportunity to choose books she likes and extend her reading as there is plenty of material for Maria's

use in the home, belonging to either herself or her older brother; there are picture story books some of which Maria can tackle herself and longer stories for older children, which are read aloud to Maria by an adult. There are tapes connected to some of these books which Lucy thinks helps Maria with reading by making the stories and vocabulary familiar. Some books are in the family's second language; Maria will often hear books which have been chosen because they have a special appeal to her.

Lucy attaches importance to environmental print which Lucy thinks is relevant to Maria. Lucy encourages Maria to use the context in environmental reading on signs and noticeboards, an example being the recent use of a calendar when Maria realised that what she was reading was related to a month and was therefore able to identify the word.

In the pre-school years Maria was keen on writing (especially the family's names) and attempting to read her writing, and the parents encouraged this; books in which to write are freely available.

Lucy says she has received very little instruction on how to help - no clear guidelines, and would welcome guidance. However, she does many things to help of her own initiative such as teaching sounds and words, building sounds up to words, encouraging reading of the child's own writing, encouraging an interest in environmental print, talking about reading and writing and buying suitable books.

Maria has always enjoyed books of all kinds being read to her, particularly those that have a special interest like humorous books, interactive books with flaps and pulls, books with a mischievous female protagonist and books with very detailed pictures. When the children were babies Lucy would speak and read aloud in the family's second language and she continues to read aloud for the sake of the spoken rather than the written second language, though she hopes that eventually the children will learn to read it.

Reading aloud at home

It was not possible to record a session of Maria reading at home, but the checklist and the interview provided important details about reading aloud experiences. Sometimes Lucy uses reading aloud to point out spelling patterns. She follows the text with her finger and circles a particularly interesting or common word in the hope that Maria will notice it and recognise it again:

"I do it calmly. I don't say 'Look at this - these letters should go together!' It's all very, hopefully, relaxed. ... Sometimes I might play with it if it's a word that has a very common ending. Then I'll put other initial onto that to give her an idea of how its used ... 'our' for instance, because it's a very unusual spelling. I say if we put a 'fl' in front of it it's 'flour' and an 'h', it's 'hour'. But I don't do too much, it's just to give an idea of how the words sound."

Reading aloud is a relatively new experience; previously Maria would follow the print with her finger and mouth the words. Lucy thinks that actually reading out loud has helped Maria improve recently.

Lucy helps Maria with difficult words in a number of ways; she may ask Maria the initial sounds, sound the word for her or ask her to look at the picture.

Maria at school

Maria is in the same reception class as Emma and is generally a confident member of the class. Maria has settled down in most respects, though observations showed that she was sometimes rather tearful on being left in the morning. Maria seemed annoyed on occasions by the more boisterous boys especially if their attention was turned to her, but she usually handled them by verbal rebuffs and returned to her work.

Once settled down she appeared a willing worker completing language, maths, science and art tasks readily. She cooperated willingly in the study and talked with ease about the work she was doing. She enjoyed the class story times and

read happily to her teacher when called.

The development of reading at school

Maria is perceived as a bright child by Diana who believes she has a rich variety of experiences at home

" In science she's the one who comes up with the answers regularly ...in the home there's obviously a very broad attitude to knowledge ... she knows so much ... she must be taken out and told things ..."

This leads Diana to have certain expectations of Maria and of the contribution her home can make. Despite Maria's varied home experience she's not as advanced with reading as Diana would expect; but Diana is confident that Maria will have no problems with reading as she is doing reasonably well so far.

While Diana has expressed some wariness about over-eager parents, she suggests that for Maria, the parents could push just a little more so that Maria could reach her full potential,

"... perhaps I would be happy if they were pushing her a little bit more because she's a very bright child ... she certainly is capable of being on level 4 if she was getting the regular practice ... she isn't by any means the furthest on with reading"

Despite this attitude, Diana does not ask the parents specifically to help Maria more or suggest ways they could help specifically with the books. Rather she leaves the decision to read at home to Maria and her parents. She assumes that Maria does not ask her parents to help more, and takes this to mean that Maria is not a very keen reader. Diana regards the home as supportive of learning and values the experiences they offer, and in line with her general views on not wanting to pressure parents accepts what she believes they want to do.

Use of reading aloud

The following examples show how Diana uses reading sessions to teach and reinforce, how she has an expectation that some words will be known and some will be difficult and how she helps accordingly. It also demonstrates how Diana reinforces

the visual aspects of reading within the text (e.g. d and b). Diana thinks the visual aspects of reading important although she also relied quite heavily on phonics in the recorded session.

Diana encouraged Maria to talk about and enjoy the book and encouraged her to look at and use the pictures to enhance the meaning of the story.

Maria read the first two pages of the book without hesitation and Diana praised her. Maria then hesitated and Diana allowed Maria time to identify the word herself;

M: In the middle of the pond was ... (three seconds hesitation) ... a big ... white feather

D: Good!

Diana also allowed time for Maria to make self-corrections

M: Then he ... then ... there was a stick by the pond

D: Good!

Diana then decided that Maria needed help with a word after she failed to make a self-correction. She helped with an initial sound, then a blend:

M: Billy took ... Billy ...

D: t..t..t... tr ...

M: tried ...

D: Good!

Diana explains why she provided this help saying

" She found it difficult - it is a difficult word ... she didn't get it on 't' so I said 'tr' and then she got 'tried' "

When Maria was asked how she managed to identify the word with Diana's help she said

"I did it from saying the letters and making the sounds"

When Maria met the word 'tried' again and did not identify it immediately, Diana pointed back to the previous example of the word (non-verbal word prompt) and Maria then identified it correctly. Diana explained as follows;

D: I pointed back to it ... to indicate that it was the same word she had got there ...

PC: ... And did that help you when you were stuck?

M: Yes - I remembered it

Diana also uses the technique of silently pointing at a miscued word (non-verbal negative feedback) explaining

" ... she needs to look again ... "

and Maria responded:

M: Johnny Yellow Hat ran up. 'Oh Billy,' he cried. 'I will go ... (Diana points - negative feedback) ... get a rope.'

PC: Maria, first you said 'go', then Diana kept pointing to it ...

M: She wanted me to look at that word again

PC: How did you work out that the word was 'get'?

M: Well I knew the 'e' had a higher sound - like this 'ee' (i.e used phonic analysis)

When Maria hesitated Diana gave her a word cue:

M: I am stuck in the middle ... (hesitation)

D: in the ... (word cue)

M: .. in the mud and I can not get out. Help! Help! Help!

Maria then made a "good" miscue; Diana did not accept it but helped (phonetic analysis) as follows;

M: ... so he ran ... down ... to ...

D: b..b

M: ... back to his house for a rope

D: Good

Diana explained:

"I think she probably knows the word ... and it's giving her the first sound. You said 'down' originally, didn't you? Probably she's confusing 'b' and 'd' - and having got the 'b' she probably knew the rest of the word ... It's not sounds really, she does know these words ..."

Diana then decided to teach the difference between 'd' and 'b' using a visual aid;

"Look Maria, (drawing in back of comments book)

lets draw a bed b...e...d, And that's the pillow so
'b' goes there and that's the bottom of the bed
going inwards b...e...d b...e...d That's what it
is ... the 'b' and the 'd' ..."

Asked about using the comments book in this way Diana explained:

"If I think I can make a small point like this,
we'd write in the back, for Maria to look at again"

Diana had said that reading at home was for practice so that the child was able to read each book competently before moving on to the next stage or book. In this session she accepted that Maria had read the book at home ready to move onto the next.

Comparing home and school

Maria is generally a confident child and apparently enjoys reading. Both parent and teacher share the view that reading will bring pleasure, although the parent is perhaps more concerned about the usefulness of reading print in the environment for which Maria shows great interest.

Both parent and teacher believe that word identification skills are important, although Lucy is perhaps more concerned with the conditions surrounding reading, that is a relaxed, pleasurable atmosphere. Diana and Lucy use the scheme books for a structure and basis to teach and reinforce skills, but Lucy in particular is not restricted to it. She devises her own ways of helping with books that Maria chooses.

At present, only scheme books are sent home for reading aloud, and while neither Lucy nor Maria appear to like these much, (and they object to the characters and situations portrayed not to schemes in general) there is no real conflict as they do use them as an exercise for the purposes of seeing progress. They tend to see the scheme as a means to an end (exciting, dramatic reading) whereas Diana regards them more as an essential core. While Maria is able to discuss the books with her parents, she does not talk to her teacher about her dislikes; Lucy sees this as a conflict, but reports that Maria can cope with this and sees that it is

part of a broader reading plan.

As there was no reading aloud session recorded at home, it is difficult to say whether the parents and teacher differ in helping to identify words; however, based on Lucy's reports, it is clear that Lucy gives varied types of help and like Diana, is aware of different patterns of sound and spelling which help with identification as well as guessing and picture clues. It seems likely that parent and teacher help in similar ways; when asked at school, Maria says she has no preference as to who hears reading, or to the way she is helped. She did indicate a preference for story books as opposed to scheme books when asked and said that she liked the stories better. Maria seemed unconfused by two curricula; both parent and teacher said they did not think Maria experienced any confusion in changing from one curriculum to the other.

An interesting situation emerges in connection with the teacher's opinion that Maria would reach her full potential if she was heard reading aloud more often at home. She would not put pressure on the family, and nor would Lucy want to pressure Maria. However, a situation involving peer pressure and teasing about lack of progress had arisen, making Maria unhappy and both Maria and Lucy have been motivated to read more to catch up. It seems to be that when the pressure was from outside the family and was potent enough, the family changed its plans and behaviour.

Perhaps, if in general, the school did ask the parents to do regular reading with the children in such a way that children thought it important, then the parents might accept this without feeling that the family was pushing the child unduly.

Lucy implies that the structure and discipline that the school offers are important. She may try to emulate this in the holidays (without success) but does not like to apply pressure to a child. Lucy apparently applies different standards to home and school; it is acceptable for the school

to apply some pressure within the context of school, but not acceptable to Lucy for her to attempt the same thing.

Lucy thought that more information was needed by parents about how reading is taught in general and more specific instructions about what to do on a day to day basis if parents were to be effective in helping with reading. Lucy thinks such instruction would help parents who need to give less thought to how to help, especially those who are already stretched through domestic, economic and personal anxieties. She does not put herself in this category and is innovative and confident about what she is doing in general, but still would welcome more information; however, she says if a workshop was organised she might not find the time to go. She would like more regular feedback through the PACT comments book when she does hear reading, and finds that if there is lively and positive interaction between home and school she is more likely to keep helping. Lucy feels that the school does a great deal to encourage parent participation, but not all parents seem to take advantage of it and encouragement in reading is not specific enough.

CASE 5

Rex at home

Rex is five and a half and lives with his professional parents and two year old sister in a modern housing development in a mixed area of London. Rex is an outgoing boy, robust and tall for his age. He is independent and enjoys outdoor play, often with older children.

The development of reading at home

Laura and Jack, Rex's parents, took part in the study; they are keen to help Rex with reading, particularly his mother, who is interested in understanding reading processes. Both parents have flexibility with their working hours and consequently spend quite considerable time with the children after school.

Laura sees learning to read as the matching up of visual and

auditory skills in a consistent way such that similar words will be recognised later. She believes a learner reader needs decoding skills and the most helpful way to identify words is to use initial and other sounds to build up words. Rex reading aloud provides an opportunity to practice and be taught new skills and to gain confidence by demonstrating his skills. Laura encourages him to dissect words and demonstrates for him; she prefers him not to rely on the pictures, the context or guessing as she thinks this will not help him with new words in the future. Laura regards reading as a challenging, problem solving exercise; she sees sounding words successfully as the "key to the fascinating puzzle of words"; he enjoys the challenge especially as it allows him to share the adult world which he values. Rex is read a regular bedtime story which his mother thinks helps to motivate him to read by associating reading with a pleasant time, increasing his appetite for books. Laura hopes that Rex will learn to read when he needs to and will have no particular problems. He may prefer practical material although she would like him to read imaginative books; she would like to foster reading for pleasure.

The parents think that the home has a role in helping with reading as part of the general atmosphere of encouraging curiosity and learning as part of family life. They can help particularly with making reading relevant through reading environmental print that they meet in the course of everyday life. They think they could help more if they knew more about how reading is taught at school, but though they have discussed reading with the teacher do not think it is clear how they could complement her input. The parents help because they enjoy doing so and consider the teacher cannot be expected to do it all with a big class and the disruptions of new children each term. The parents can give individual attention which may be lacking in school.

The parents think the school can take a more directive role than home in teaching reading; it provides structure and discipline which are conducive to learning plus peers who

exert a subtle pressure and approval. The teacher has professional expertise making sure no essential skills are missed; she can also deliver praise and discipline which will mean more to the child. However, Laura approves that the teacher does not force the child to read if s/he feels disinclined.

Rex did not show much interest in books before he went into the nursery and his interest has only increased a little since then. He is not particularly excited about what he can read and not really keen to read aloud; when asked about his school book he said

"I don't like reading it, it's boring".

His mother thinks Rex is a little behind in achievement in reading; she says he perhaps needs more individual attention and pushing but because he is older and more able than most of the class, she cannot expect him to get a larger share of the teacher's limited resources. She is reluctant to push him, consequently she does not help him as much as she thinks she could.

Laura thinks that the family could help by providing a role model for reading, but does not feel proud of the fact that this is hardly ever provided. The parents might read a newspaper but Laura is not a habitual reader and usually only reads a book on holiday. Because Jack has a problem with dyslexia (he still spells very poorly and prefers to read short articles) he would rarely be seen reading a book as this would be difficult for him and give no pleasure.

The school has an expectation that the home will help; however, a greater influence on the parents to help are Rex's peers; Rex wants to do as they do, and if this means reading at home he will do so.

Rex enjoys a daily story but the parents do not have a regular reading routine for hearing Rex read aloud. He may read in the late afternoon or at bedtime but sometimes he is over-tired and only reads a little from his school book,

usually for ten minutes, three times a week. Laura says the family is not very good about returning books to school and so does not get many new books brought home; as the books are graded Rex does not progress as fast as he might. Rex does not read his own books aloud much, although he enjoys looking at the pictures.

The teacher expects parental help, asking parents to encourage children to use books and the library and to cultivate a daily reading habit within a pleasurable atmosphere. The teacher is not directive about helping with difficult words, so Rex's parents do as they think best and comment in the PACT notebook. Both parents would like more information (perhaps through group meetings) on what the school is doing, so they could replicate it and be more effective.

Reading aloud

Rex reads aloud from his graded scheme book and while his mother thinks the books are useful in providing a structure through which to practice skills and progress, both she and Rex think the books boring; Rex sometimes makes fun of them by deliberately misreading words.

In a recorded session Rex read to Jack. Rex did not appear very keen to read aloud; his enthusiasm varied but he read a few short pages. Jack did not discuss the book or the pictures, and relied on sounding to identify words, as Laura had described previously.

Jack helped Rex to sound out "house" and "nearly" (phonic analysis) . He helped with "wake" and "like", reminding Rex of the rule for words ending with "e" (taught rule). He explained, saying:

"Well we went through that last week, when there is "e" at the end, it makes "ah" into "ay". I just reminded Rex of what we had said."

Rex managed to sound out some words without help, for example

"it's" and "in". Without reference to sounds and without hesitation, Rex identified longer words ("breakfast" and "morning"); Jack praised Rex for this and for attempts to sound words.

Asked whether he like reading aloud, Rex said

"not really, it's hard and it's boring sometimes."

Asked if he liked his parents to help him with the sounds, he said

"Yes, sometimes. Sometimes I do them myself and sometimes they help me if I'm stuck."

Rex at school

Rex goes to the same school as Maria and Emma, but is in a different reception class. He is one of the older and more confident children in the class and enjoys being occupied with a variety of tasks. He was usually seen working steadily and quite enthusiastically in the classroom. His teacher is Kitty, an experienced and enthusiastic teacher who moved to the school recently to take up a senior position. Kitty creates a lively and creative atmosphere in the classroom, which is always bright with displays of children's work and learning aids.

The development of reading at school

In the early stages of reading Kitty will spend time talking about the pictures, which she considers an integral part of the story and would never cover the picture when a child is reading. She is concerned with children understanding and enjoying both story and pictures, interest in reading and connecting the picture with the words, the sentence being the "key to the picture". She will help them to recognise words, or use sounds, the context, the picture or a guess to help, although it is not essential to identify every word. Most important is having the confidence to use these skills and to try putting them together to read; praise will increase confidence.

The child reading aloud is an opportunity to practice skills

and to feel a sense of achievement by moving through the stages of the reading scheme. Children also gain confidence from reading environmental print and "Breakthrough to literacy" material. Kitty depends heavily on "Breakthrough" and thinks it is very helpful for children to read their own sentences and extend their reading vocabulary.

Kitty reads stories aloud regularly to the class and thinks this helps them by improving listening skills and concentration. Enjoyment of the story (particularly when she dramatises it) will motivate them to want to read.

The teacher offers professional skills and different strategies in teaching reading, as well as assessing and suiting individual needs. The parents can play their part in helping reading by providing a relaxed, cosy and undisturbed environment at home when the child reads aloud. If they are to be partners in the child's learning and help the child reach his or her full potential, the parents will need information about helping, which Kitty is always happy to give.

Individual characteristics influence Kitty's curriculum. She says she treats each child according to his or her needs at any time and when hearing them read aloud will help them according to their strengths and weaknesses. She perceives Rex as having made very good progress during his reception year; starting with recognition of only a few words and being able to write his name, he is now making good progress. She thinks he is not a very keen reader, but is interested and cooperative and likes to progress through the reading scheme. This being so, she encourages Rex to work hard and uses reading aloud time to help him increase his reading vocabulary as much as possible.

Kitty is very much aware of the different social circumstances of the parents and perceives a need to adapt her teaching according to the group to which children belong. If the family has social or unemployment problems and is

unable to give time to their children, Kitty will try to compensate in school and give children extra time. She expects the more advantaged children to receive help from their parents and thinks they usually do well; however she finds some of them inclined to be "pushy" and in such a case would try to work with the parents and find a comfortable level of help for them to give. Kitty feels she has built up a very positive relationship with most parents and sees Rex's parents as supportive.

She is influenced by the school's policy regarding use of schemes and general approach to reading; however, she chooses to work in the school because she agreed with its policies. The National Curriculum and the local inspectorate make particular demands, though these are in line with her curriculum.

There is plenty of material available in the classroom for reading and Kitty has some help from assistants and parents; this allows her to concentrate on hearing reading as often as possible. She does not like to rush children and hears them read and talks about the book for a good ten minutes two or three times a week. She would like more time, especially for the newer members of the class.

Kitty expects parents to help with reading at home if possible. She demonstrates school materials during a parents' session and believes this helps parents to be more effective helpers. Books are sent home for the child to read and parents are invited to come and discuss problems or ask for advice if they wish. In Rex's case, Kitty has asked the parents to listen to reading and return books regularly and is satisfied that they now help more regularly. If she found a parent was doing anything considered counterproductive (like covering pictures) she would explain to them how they could help more constructively. Comments in the PACT book are specifically aimed at helping an individual at his or her current level; she would explain about reinforcing words or using phonics if asked by a parent. Generally, she strongly

advises parents not to express anxiety, because of the danger of transferring it to the child. Discussion usually takes place on a casual basis when the parents come into school to collect their children.

Reading aloud

When they read aloud, Kitty helps children with identification of words. The most advanced readers are helped to improve their fluency and expression, while with less advanced readers she spends time talking about the book and the pictures. This is what she did with Rex.

In the recorded session Rex read two books, both from outside the main scheme. They were very simple, repetitive, with colourful illustrations and a short sentence on each page; Rex was able to read them with very little help. Kitty spent most of the time discussing the title, the story (such as it was), the pictures and the variations in size of the print which indicated that some words should be read louder than others. Kitty praised Rex's efforts and encouraged Rex to comment on the book, for instance when the aeroplane crashed he asked

Rex: How did they get out if it went 'crash'?

Kitty: Well anything can happen in a book.

When Rex substituted "around" for "round" Kitty asked him the sound at the beginning of "round" to which he answered "r" (phonic analysis); she then explained to him the following

"There's actually a word called 'around' that's written with 'a' at the front. And you say 'around'. That one's 'round' it starts with 'r'."

Asked whom he liked to help him Rex said he liked it at school

"Because if I get stuck on a word, Kitty just tells me."

He said that he sometimes liked to read big books himself, but liked his mummy to read him stories.

Comparing home and school

There are differences in the way the parents and teacher view

learning to read and what they do. The parents are orientated to a phonic approach and use sounding as the main means of word identification. Kitty also uses phonics, the initial sounds at least, but encourages guessing. She also put emphasis on the picture and enjoyment, not noticed in the home session.

Neither parent or teacher think that Rex suffers any confusion in transferring from home to school. His mother thinks he's not pressured to read at home or at school if disinclined. Kitty thinks the parents show a lot of interest and give support and find out what is going on at school and do the same. However, Laura and Jack would like to know more about the school's methods, but do not ask, apparently because they think the teacher is short of time. Nor do they get around to buying a book about teaching reading, although Laura admits she easily could. Kitty seems to have a stereotypical view (i.e. professional, aware and actively involved) of Rex's parents which leads her to think they help more than they do.

It was noticeable that Rex seemed to enjoy reading the non-reading scheme book during the school session; the parents did not indicate that anything other than reading schemes were sent home, which is perhaps unfortunate from the point of view of Rex's enjoyment.

The parents say that given the constraints of a very mixed ability group, they are happy with what school offers; however they think perhaps Rex could be pushed a little more at school (without entering into competition) to reach his potential; like many parents, Laura dislikes applying pressure herself.

CASE 6

Mike at home

Mike is five and a quarter, is quiet but confident when spoken to, and lives with his parents and nine year old brother in a flat in a large converted house in a relatively

expensive area.

The development of reading at home

Mike's father is a very busy college teacher, his mother Carol is an ex-art teacher who does not now work outside the home. Carol had a serious illness when Mike was a baby which left her with speech, language and motor disabilities; however, she leads a full and active life and was very interested in taking part in the research.

Carol believes that in learning to read, Mike needs to recognise common words, having read them many times or been told them by an adult. He also needs to sound words (she will often demonstrate for him) so that he can identify them out of context. Mike needs to remember a specific sound and connect it with a written form. She thinks that in reading, guessing and using the context and pictures are not helpful for future reading and sometimes covers pictures up to see if Mike can read without them. When Mike reads aloud he has the opportunity to practice phonic skills and repeat and reinforce known words. His mother has the opportunity to help with difficult words; she either reads them for Mike to repeat or teaches sounding and word building, as she judges appropriate. A reading scheme is helpful because of its systematic repetition of common words which helps reinforcement. If he uses a school book, Mike usually knows it well and reads without much help; with a less familiar book of his own, Carol may read it first pointing out familiar words, after which Mike will read it with help.

Carol believes that enjoying books, read by child or adult, is important in motivating the child to read, so they spend a lot of time on reading. Mike loves hearing stories and his mother may read four stories most bedtimes; she believes this gives pleasure and motivates, though it probably does not have a direct effect on Mike's reading progress. She assumes Mike will become a proficient reader naturally if he learns to enjoy books.

Carol believes the school does the basic teaching of reading and the home can reinforce. As well as helping with school books, Carol buys schemes for reading and writing, which she uses when Mike feels inclined. He enjoys putting sounds together and the books help to increase Mike's vocabulary. She believes that in general children will do better at school given parental support; she regrets that she was not able to read to Mike's brother when he was younger (through her illness) and wishes to make amends to Mike. The home can give necessary individual attention which is unavailable in a class of thirty. But whatever help is given must be in an atmosphere of enjoyment, must not seem like hard work.

She thinks seeing people reading in the home will motivate Mike but unfortunately he has no model; his father is not at home much, his mother's disabilities make reading adult books too difficult and his brother is not a keen reader (possibly, Carol thinks, because she was not able to read to him after the age of four because of her illness).

Mike liked books from an early age, but has not been much interested in environmental print; Carol says this is because she was not able to take him out much when he was smaller. She is keen to encourage him as much as she can and thinks he is doing well but takes account of his moods and will not pressure him if he seems tired or unwilling.

Carol knows the school expects parents to help if possible and she is curious to understand how they teach; to her it seems very different from her own experiences of learning in another country. She would, therefore, like advise about methods, especially sounding, as she wants to avoid confusion. As it is, books are sent home, she is asked to hear Mike read and sometimes teach specific words, and in the absence of any other instructions, relies mostly on sounding and memorising. Unless the family has visitors or he is very tired, Mike reads for 10 to 15 minutes every night using the family's own supply of books or those from the school or

library. Carol finds that the schemes she buys act as a guide, saving her effort which is tiring for her.

Reading aloud

Often Mike reads from a scheme book, but sometimes, as in the recording illustrated, he reads another book which he knows well. Mike read his father a simple book with a sentence per page and his father helped with sound clues as well as providing a word.

Mike: Up went the tiger

Up went the ... I can't see (the picture is obscured) ... lion ... Down came the tree ... home ... house (he made a self correction) ... BIM!

Father: BAM! (his father provided the word rather than the middle sound)

With the next short book, His father helped Mike as follow;

Mike: Baby painted the floor ... Baby ...

Father: That's not baby ... (negative feedback)

Mike: Oh ... and the wall ... and the ...

Father: (Giving the first sound) Ch ... (phonic analysis)

Mike: Chair ... and the ...

Father: C ... (phonic analysis)

Mike: cat

Father: Good

His father explained that Mike needed to be reminded of some sounds, then he could get the word.

Asked about being helped, Mike said he sometimes liked to hear stories better than reading; he liked his mum or dad to tell him the first sound and then sometimes he remembered a word, but he liked them to tell him a word if it was too hard.

Mike at school

Mike is in the same class as Rex and is quiet but confident and seemed to enjoy all the activities in which he was observed taking part. He particularly seemed to like drawing

and spending time on the details.

The development of reading at school

Kitty, his teacher, regards Mike as an active boy who has been in school a term less than Rex and consequently not so far advanced in literacy but doing quite well; she says he likes to try to keep pace with his peers. She likes to encourage him to enjoy books and gain confidence in reading and praises his efforts. Kitty is happy to let him work at his own pace without pressure.

Kitty sees Carol frequently after school and talks about Mike's progress and answers any questions. Kitty regards Carol as very supportive and asks her to help at home so that Mike will get on faster. Kitty urges her to make sure that Mike reads all the words.

Reading aloud

In the recorded session, Kitty spent most of the time talking about the story and the pictures, asking Mike to comment on them as they went along. The text was very repetitive with variations on "Where is it? It's not in my home. Can I help you look".

Mike substituted "it" for "is" and Kitty pointed out the "s" and "t" a few times and praised him when he identified the words correctly. Unable to identify "can" immediately, Kitty helped Mike by emphasising the c-shape with her finger (non-verbal/ phonic word-cue) and explained that this reminded him of the sound so that he was then able to identify correctly. Kitty provided "you" explaining that although he identified the "y" correctly, the class had not done the "ou" combination yet.

Mike said he liked it better when Kitty told him a word and did not like to be told the sounds, but was unable to say why. He said he liked Kitty to read him stories and preferred the book he had just read to the reading scheme books because he liked "the pages inside it" and indicated some of the

details in the pictures.

Comparing home and school

Parent and teacher view the reading process rather differently, Kitty emphasising enjoyment and confidence in reading in general while Carol is very keen for words to be identified outside the context with reference mainly, although not exclusively, to sounds. Carol regards reading essentially as a decoding skill and is keen for Mike to get on fast; she helps him enjoy books by reading very often to him. In practice at both home and school Mike is expected to identify most words and will be helped in this by either having the word supplied or by sounding, according to whether the adult thinks he has seen the word or its components before and whether the word can readily be sounded. The adults are very keen to avoid pressure and try to help Mike in a relaxed atmosphere where he feels happy about reading.

Neither teacher nor parent think Mike is confused in any way by two systems and Mike did not indicate that he ever gets muddled. He prefers to be told words but attends to sounds when asked. His teacher is confident that the parents are sensible, have good working relations with the school and do not "invent" their own methods; if any difficulties did arise, these would be easily sorted out. Mike's mother has had no indication of confusion and thinks that Mike would tell her if he felt confused. She thinks she does about the same as the school, but wishes she had more information about exactly how they teach so that she could do the same and avoid the possibility of complicating things for Mike. She would like more instruction from Kitty, but feels that the teacher has not the time, especially as Carol's speech is so hesitant. Meanwhile, Kitty says that she communicates information whenever Carol asks.

CASE 7

Lee at home

Lee is five and a quarter and lives in a local authority flat (in a mixed area) with his thirteen year old brother and

single-parent mother. He is a cheerful boy, and is usually eager to do some reading and writing in the evenings. His weekends are busy sharing shopping and social commitments with his mother.

Lee's mother, Beverley, has a very busy life working full-time as a medical secretary and caring for her family and home when she returns from work in the evening. She appears a very energetic person who manages to share her time out between work and children, such that the children have her undivided attention for a period in the evening after the chores are finished. Lee is cared for by a child-minder before and after school.

Parental beliefs and practices relating to literacy development

Beverley believes children learn to read by connecting the spoken and printed word and by learning to recognise words that they hear in stories; it will help if the child hears a model reading of a story by an adult or other proficient reader and he will then attempt to read the story himself. Complete accuracy in identifying words is not necessary at first. Learning to read helps learning to write which is very important.

The school can offer a professional expertise that ensures that the most up to date teaching methods are used, and school can offer more books than Beverley can. The school has a library in which a favourable atmosphere can be created to enjoy reading and hearing stories, an activity from her own school days that Beverley enjoyed and now values; she cannot create this at home.

Looking to the future, Beverley thinks it is essential that Lee is a proficient reader by the time he goes to secondary school, otherwise he might have problems, need extra help and be set back. She believes that he should get into the habit of reading and writing at this early age (5) as later it will be harder; good habits will ensure that he does well at

school later on. She does not think it too early to think about his future as she considers that children grow up so fast. Beverley enjoys helping Lee (as she did her older son) and says that parents should help with reading.

Psychology of participants

Beverley is motivated to help with reading partly because of Lee's interest in books. She sees Lee as a bright boy and keen reader; he often asks her to read with him when it is not convenient or possible, for instance at supper time. Before starting school Lee was eager to hear stories, read, write and do simple maths at the age of three; she was keen to satisfy him at that age, looked forward to him starting school, and eager to keep alive his interest in literacy activities until he could go to school. So his mother took note and used the hints and tips on how to help with reading in the pre-school books she bought and she encouraged Lee to colour, count, write his name and make up stories for series of pictures without words, having shown him how. Beverley enjoys helping with reading and seeing her son progress.

Social influences

Beverley belongs to a society where there are many working single parents and she realises that they cannot all find time to help their children, given their other commitments. As a single parent Beverley is particularly concerned to do her best for her children and although busy, she sets aside the time to help Lee.

Practical aspects

With regard to the materials used for reading at home Beverley relies very much on the books that are sent home in the PACT folder for both herself and Lee to read aloud. There has always been a good supply of books from school as Lee used to bring home books from his pre-school group and changes his PACT book regularly; both his mother and teacher say that he enjoys the books. There are books at home, but she says most of them are too advanced, having too many words

on a page for Lee to enjoy at the moment. Beverley has been used to buying books for Lee to do reading, colouring letter formation and maths activities. Apart from books, Lee has the opportunity to use a computer at home which involves some reading and he is now interested in environmental print outside the home which he and his mother point out and read.

Although she has a very busy life working full time, attending to all the domestic chores single-handed, looking after her children and supervising her older son's homework Beverley does not see it as a problem to find the time to give Lee 15-20 minutes undivided attention for literacy activities each day when she gets home. She says it is for her to make the time and clearly puts considerable effort into setting aside the time after supper and before Lee's bedtime to spend with him reading, and some days forming letters and maybe doing a few sums.

Where she is short of time is for going into school and seeing in general what Lee is doing; she says Lee takes great pride in showing her his school work and the class projects and values the few occasions she has gone into school. She makes the effort to go to special meetings and uses the PACT notebook effectively, but regrets not being able to at least deliver Lee to school and go to the classroom with him and would like to work flexi-time to enable her to do this.

The school only asks her to read aloud or hear Lee reading according to the level of the book, and to make comments (which usually are concerned with progress) in the notebook. Most of the things she does are of her own initiative; Beverley teaches Lee to recognise the letters and sounds, how to form letters and encourages Lee to spell and dictates spellings to him. Lee may read for himself or have read to him by his mother or brother stories, rhymes and notices and Beverley considers these activities more varied than the reading and writing he does at school. Beverley says she would probably get more specific instructions if she was able to get into school more. As it is, she is satisfied with the

dialogue between herself and the teacher and goes along with the school and does what she can at home the best way she knows how. She does not think that she offers anything different or better than the school but agrees that she gives him undivided attention that is difficult to give in school.

Use of reading aloud

Beverley reads Lee's PACT book to him if she considers it a difficult book and would take over the reading if it was too long. If she thinks he knows some of the words, they would read it together after which Lee would probably read it himself. When she reads she points to the words so that he'll know what they are and will learn them for himself and has also taught him to point himself. She notices that some words he learns very easily but others, she will have to tell him again and again. Actually reading the words aloud gives him the chance to "pick up" words and he is very pleased when he can point out and read words. They might stop during the reading for Beverley to ask what the page or story is about, and Lee will tell her in his own words. She does not help him with the sound of words yet; she says perhaps she should, but at the moment it's too early. Lee might know a book well, in which case he will read it aloud and spend only a few minutes on this as it is likely to be a short book.

In the recorded session Lee read a book with which he was familiar. He pointed to the words as he read and read fluently stumbling over only three words (out of 85). In the case of the first misidentification his mother helped by reminding him that she had told him the word previously, with the expectation that he would remember it, which he did:

Lee: "Wilf and Wilma went to a dolphin pool. The dolphin played with he ball. Wilma got ... "

Mother: No - what did I say that word was? (Word prompting)

Lee: " Climbed ... "

Mother: That's it

Lee: " ... up the ladder "

Mother: Yes

Asked how he read "climbed" having first read "got" he said "I thought" and indeed his face showed that he was thinking hard.

He then read seven sentences absolutely fluently, and the next time he made a miscue he immediately self-corrected;

Lee: "Wilma gave it some fish. The giant ... killer whale jumped up"

Asked about how he managed to make the self-correction of "killer" for "giant" he said "Because I saw it"

He then misidentified another word and his mother tried several ways to help him before apparently deciding that he would not get the word and supplied it herself;

Lee: "It ... swallowed ... "

Mother: No, you've read this word before, haven't you?

Lee: " ... got ... "

Mother: No, start again

Lee: " It jumped ... "

Mother: No ... try the rest

Lee: " ... the fish "

Mother: Now, what's that? Do you want to start again?

Lee: " It ... swallowed ..."

Mother: No, I'll have to tell you again, won't I? "Took" (provide)

Lee: " It took the fish. The killer whale splashed. Wilf and Wilma got wet. 'Oh no' said Wilf. 'Oh no' said Wilma."

Mother: That's it

Beverley could have accepted this "good" miscue (syntactically and semantically correct). Asked why she had made several attempts to encourage him to identify the word "took" before providing it she explained;

"Well, because we've read it before and he got it right. He did say the word, that's why I said to him to go back and read it again to see if it might jog his memory. But he got stuck on it."

Beverley was obviously keen for Lee to identify all the words correctly as he had read them before, although it is noticeable that Lee's miscues always made semantic and syntactic sense and would not have detracted from the story.

Both Lee and his mother were very pleased with this reading, and Lee, listening to his mother's explanations, volunteered to identify the word "took" with obvious pleasure, implying a positive attitude to being helped. However when asked Lee said that he liked his mother to read him a story better than reading himself. If he reads himself, he said he likes books that he has chosen from school.

Summary of the home curriculum

Beverley sees reading as linking sounds of words with written words and thinks Lee will learn to recognise words when he has heard the story read or seen print in the environment and had the words pointed out several times. She expects Lee to remember words he has identified previously, and will give him the opportunity to try, but will tell him a word if he does not remember it. She thinks it is too early to start on sounds. She sets out a time to do reading every day, but as she did in the pre-school days, she relies on school books for stories and reading practice. At an earlier age she bought him work books of different types and used the notes for parents. What she does to help with reading and identifying words is very much on her own initiative and only receives general instructions to "hear reading" from school. She expects she would get more specific instructions if she could get into school more, but meanwhile is happy with the progress Lee is making.

Lee at school

Lee moved into the reception class a few months ago from another nursery in the borough. He is cheerful but quiet and industrious and works independently on a variety of tasks presented to him during the school day. He is very keen on books and his teacher, Maggie, considers he is further on in literacy development than a lot of other children and is doing quite well in reading. Lee is taken to and collected from school by a child-minder so there are not many opportunities for Maggie to see his mother.

Maggie is Lee's very experienced teacher who has worked in

the language advisory service and now holds a language development post in her school. The school is more cramped and less well renovated and maintained than the other schools in the study; however, staff make the environment cheerful with displays of children's work all around the school.

Teacher's beliefs and practices relating to literacy development

Lee's teacher believes that being able to read is of the utmost importance for adult life in that it will open the way for equal opportunities and for adults to recognise and reach their full potential. Reading will bring enormous pleasure and the ability to gain information from the very earliest stages, regardless of the individual's interests. Maggie wants children to learn to read and enjoy reading and believes that children learn to 'read by reading'. She thinks it is particularly helpful if children hear books read many times until they are familiar with the language and can connect the spoken and written word consistently, and eventually recognise phrases and words; so she reads to children as much as possible. When sentences are short Maggie may point to words, in an attempt to link the written and spoken word. By hearing stories children will also gain enjoyment in books and be motivated to read for themselves; an adult reading will be a model in fluency and enjoyment. Maggie does not limit reading aloud to stories alone; the teacher and child or group of children may look at a reference book together to help the child understand the different functions of books.

She believes unfamiliar words can be identified by looking for meaning in the text;

" ... I might ask them to think about what would make sense ... from what came before and after, what would be sensible, from meaning."

Reference to the pictures can give a clue to the word as can an initial sound or blend, although 'sounding out' words is not usually very helpful and most definitely not at the age

of five.

The "language experience" approach with interesting books is the basis of Maggie's teaching; phonic skills will eventually have a use, so sounds might be pointed out for example in following the instructions in work sheets. If the child cannot read alone, the teacher will help and will point out features and initial sounds in words with the intention that this will help decoding and spelling later on:

" ... these sheets had colours ... There's two here start with 'bl' ... black, blue, so you're drawing attention to the features ... they can perhaps use that as a decoding skill ... "

The class may play 'I-spy' and watch a television programme that introduces sounds to teach the letters of the alphabet and the sounds. But Maggie thinks that such decoding skills are of most use to children when they can read quite well.

Maggie values her own professional and technical knowledge and her experience gained from many years of teaching many children to read. In school a wide variety of opportunities to read are offered and there are peers with whom to share reading; but Maggie does not think that the structure of school, especially with a high ratio of children to adults, is the best place to teach children to read;

" ... but certainly I don't think it's an ideal ... it's just chance, the way schools have evolved, the history, thirty kids and one adult, I don't believe for a moment that's the best way for a child to learn, in that sort of environment, but that's the way things are."

However, she does not think she is offering anything very special to children learning to read and they would probably be better off learning with their parents, given the time and knowledge; she is prepared to pass on her knowledge gained from experience and the research literature and advises parents on how to help. Maggie believes that, as the research shows, parents can contribute much to reading even if they are non-English speaking, but are most effective if they understand the teacher's approach. She feels that good communication with parents is essential to this. Maggie

believes that parents can give uninterrupted time and space at home for reading and they can present reading in a more intimate and loving atmosphere; the parent's praise may be more relevant than the teacher's.

Psychology of participants

Maggie recognises that different children will have different needs to be helped with learning to read depending on their stage of development and also on how much help children get at home. For those children she believes do not get help at home, she will spend more time, more frequently with them;

" ... It depends on the book they've chosen and why they've chosen it ... what stage they are at ... and how much they're being helped at home. If I feel that an individual was having no help at all, and this was the only bit of reading they did in the daytime, I might spend a bit more time."

Lee is very keen on reading and hearing stories and; his teacher says

" ... Lee's always wanting you to read to him and wanting to read himself - loving to change the books and hearing stories ... he often picks the book you've read to the class at storytime ... he has a eye out to take a certain book home and he'll find out who's got it and wait til it's brought back .. he'll try and time it ... "

Knowing that Lee is helped at home she may not spend much time reading with him, but encourages him to change books so he can take advantage of help at home with varied material.

Social influences

Maggie expects the home to be involved to the extent that she will leave much of the reading to the parents if they appear to be willing. The research literature influences Maggie; she is very keen to keep abreast of research in education, developments in teaching methods, understanding how children learn to read and the results of research on assessing the teaching of reading.

She is concerned for children's adult futures, seeing literacy as a key to enjoyment and information, including broadly political information.

Practical aspects

Maggie has very definite views about how she would like to present her particular way of learning to read. The delivery depends very much on the atmosphere of enjoyment she can create. But Maggie is very much hampered in the way she can present reading, mainly by the number of children in her class (28 five year olds); she has very little help in the classroom and the amount of time she can devote to each child is very limited. Space to create a conducive atmosphere is also a big problem; there is little space for the kind of book corner she would like with all books displaying their covers and comfortable chairs to sit on while choosing and reading books. The fixtures of the room are such that there is very little display space at eye-level for written material, which she would like to use more. Money for suitable books is also a problem; she would like a supply of more recently published books especially those that reflect the inner-city, multi-racial make-up of the school. Books should be of good quality, and while some books from schemes might be acceptable she does not use a reading scheme as the basis of her teaching. There are enough books for children to choose one daily to read and take home, but some of these are old and worn, and Maggie thinks this is not attractive and conducive to children learning to read. Maggie finds the general physical atmosphere so cramped that it is "bordering on the unacceptable" and sometimes appears quite defeated by a situation where putting her theory into practice is made so difficult.

Despite the physical constraints, there are racks and boxes of books in the classroom and children can be seen sitting looking through the books and enjoying choosing and reading either alone or with their teacher throughout the day when other timetabled class activities are not going on.

Because of constraints of time for individual reading and because she believes the home can provide a more favourable atmosphere than the school, Maggie depends on parents helping with reading. Parents are asked to support the teacher's

methods and to continue the school work at home, and Maggie has a system whereby she explains her methods. Before children join the reception class, their parents are invited to a talk concerning the general principles of teaching reading. The importance of the child's choice of books is explained to parents, as is the importance of reading with the child and not expecting him or her to read alone at once. The need to read and re-read familiar stories until the child can take part and take over is explained, and Maggie tells parents that no book is too hard or too easy for a child, but that the parent will need to do more or less of the reading as appropriate. After the first half-term the general principles are reiterated, and the effectiveness of the method explained by referring to research. Every child takes a book home in a PACT folder which contains basic instructions and a notebook to send and reply to messages concerning general principles and approaches. The messages are repeated at subsequent meetings, though not all parents attend.

As well as giving positive messages about reading, Maggie discourages parents from asking for easier or harder books and from teaching children to sound out words; she also discourages written homework

" ... I know that reading and writing go hand in hand, but I'm worried that if I send home writing tasks as well, that's more easy to prove that you've done it and therefore they might focus more attention on doing the bit of homework and not doing the reading bit ... people don't read enough to their children ... "

She feels that being a reception class teacher, she is in a relatively good position to get support as she sees parents regularly when they bring and collect their children and can use daily contacts to talk about reading and changing books regularly

" ... it's just somehow easier when you have a day to day relationship with people, isn't it? If you feel they haven't looked at it (PACT folder) for a week you can drop a hint, without summoning to the presence ... "

However, getting across any information to some parents is a problem, sometimes impossible, because of lack of language, so Maggie cannot always make use of frequent contact to communicate ideas. She would like more parents to be able to come in to the classroom and see what is happening if they are having problems understanding, but realises that this is often not possible because of other commitments.

Maggie sees little of Lee's mother because of her work commitments, but believes she understands the reading system and is supportive of Lee's reading. She says that once the PACT system was explained to Lee's mother she backs the school 100% and reads all the books with Lee that are sent home.

Use of reading aloud

There will be a number of opportunities to read aloud in the course of the week from captions on the wall and from large books the class uses together. The child's writing will provide material to read in the form of home-made books, word

collections used for spellings and sentences dictated by the child. One of the most important literacy activity in this reception class is choosing a book to read aloud at school and home; who reads the book, adult or child, will depend on the child's level of reading development and the type of book. There is no expectation that the child will necessarily choose a book that s/he can read aloud. The teacher will invite the child to choose a book at a convenient time; if she judges that the book will not be read at home either the teacher will read with the child allowing him or her to join in when s/he can or the child will read aloud to the teacher if appropriate. Otherwise Maggie and the child may look at the book, discuss the title, the author, the first page of the story in general or simply comment on the choice. The important thing will be to encourage the child to return books and to choose a new book every day with the intention of it being read at home. The time an individual child spends with the teacher reading will vary, some days a session will

be longer than others so that some time during the week the child will have a session where the whole book is read. Maggie aims to spend some time (however short) with each child each day choosing or reading but this is difficult with so large a class and very little help.

If the child can read the book aloud, s/he will read some of it and the teacher will see what useful strategies the child is using and will praise these and discourage unhelpful ones and perhaps talk about reading. Maggie says this is one of the main purposes of the child reading aloud. The child reading aloud will help him or her to understand the purpose of books and will provide the opportunity to gain meaning from text and link the spoken and written word.

In the recorded sessions with Lee, Maggie spent some time discussing the book before and while reading it to Lee; she gave him the chance to join in when he indicated that he wanted to, but took over rather than allowing him to struggle; there was no expectation that he would identify individual words. Maggie did point out the same initial sound of some words, saying later that it was to draw attention to a feature that he might find useful later on, but which she did not expect him to use now. The following is from the session.

Maggie: Right, Lee, what book have you got? It's called 'Runaway rabbit' - can you see the 'Ruh' like in 'Robert' (friend's name)?

Runaway Rabbit - here's the title again - by Ron - there's another big 'AHR' -Marris.

"Good morning Rabbit, where are you going? Into the house? I don't think so."

"Into the pipe?"

Lee: "Yes ... "

Maggie: " ... and out again. Hello (waits for Lee to continue) ... hello ... little duck ... can ..."

Lee: " ... I ... come ... "

Maggie: "Can I come in? Run Rabbit, run!" It's 'ruh' again ... Look the duck's lifting its wings and saying 'ssss'.

Lee: "Here's a carrot ... " (hesitation)

Maggie: "Here's a carrot for you." (provides) He likes carrot.

Lee: Rabbits eat carrots.

Maggie: They do, yes - "Got you!" The rabbit came out for the carrot and the boy said "Got you!" "Don't run away again rabbit." They had to chase him all round. The runaway rabbit - you could tell mummy about that rabbit tonight, can't you?

The next day Maggie recorded another session with Lee using the same book which he had obviously read with his mother. Lee needed only a little help with a few words and read with great pleasure. These sessions demonstrated Maggie putting into practice her principles about early reading; the emphasis was on choice of book, enjoyment and meaning (she discussed the book and commented on the story as it was read to enhance the meaning). She pointed out phonic features for future use, and she made a correction in Lee's reading of the title, but otherwise there was no expectation that it would be read word perfect. The second reading was accurate except for "I've got a carrot for you" (non-response to a "good" miscue) instead of "Here's a carrot for you" Maggie commented later that the sense was the same so she did not want to spoil the flow by correcting it. She would dislike the child to feel that he read it "wrong" as she thinks that confidence is very important in reading. It is important for the beginner to feel that he is reading, regardless of whether all the words are identified accurately. Lee's reading was an example of what Maggie says is learning to "read by reading"; the book had been read a number of times until Lee could read it. She said that Lee has a very good memory and this would help him; most probably his mother or brother had read the book to Lee at home and he had read it himself, the ideal situation for having children become very familiar with favourite books and eventually reading them for themselves.

Summary of the school curriculum

There are opportunities for reading books, material displayed around the classroom and the children's own writing in the

course of the school day. The teacher's emphasis in teaching reading is on the child choosing books s/he wants to read, on confidence in reading and on the repetition of familiar texts until the child can read these texts themselves. The teacher relies on her work being continued at home and gives most individual attention to those children whom she believes are not helped much at home. But she does try to spend time with all children each day talking about the books they choose. The essence of the curriculum that Maggie plans is a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere but she feels restrained in her delivery by large numbers of children and lack of suitable books and space.

Comparing the home and school curriculum

Both Lee's mother and teacher value reading highly both now and in the adult future; they believe that children will learn to read by hearing and reading aloud familiar books and they give Lee the opportunity to read as much as he is able of any book. His teacher prefers not to correct miscues if the meaning is not altered or if she considers the flow of reading might be spoiled. However, his mother expects him to identify words he has read before, although she would tell him the word if necessary and expect him to remember next time. These differences do not seem to worry Lee, in fact he indicated his pride when he did remember a previously misidentified word. Both teacher and mother think it is too early for sounding out words, although his teacher did point out several phonic features in the recorded session, presumably for future use.

There do not appear to be any conflicts for Lee in changing from one curriculum to the other; he says he likes both mother and teacher to help him. Neither adult reports any conflict for Lee; his mother says that she goes along with the school, and his teacher says she is pleased with and confident in what Lee and his mother do at home.

The only area where there is a difficulty in relationships between home and school is in the mother's inability to go

into school often enough to seek general information. Beverley regrets this and would like the opportunity to improve general relationships with the school. However, she sees no particular problem with the communications about reading and writing.

CASE 8

Felicity at home

Felicity is five and lives with her professional parents and nine year old sister in a renovated cottage in a mixed area of London. Both parents have heavy work commitments outside the home and the children are cared for by a nanny outside school hours.

The development of reading at home

Felicity's mother, Miranda, believes that it is important for beginner readers to have confidence in reading; children will use the language they already have to make words fit the pictures to make sense. They will recognise words and use phonic skills to identify individual words, although every child will be different and it is important to discover what skills and individual can use best. Miranda presumes that the child reading aloud helps development; it gives her the opportunity to supply difficult words although a sensible word might be left uncorrected. Miranda thinks that phonics are not very useful yet but sometimes she or Felicity will use an initial sound for word identification. An adult reading aloud helps the child if s/he is able to watch the book and connect the picture, print and spoken word.

Miranda expects the school to take the main responsibility for reading, as the child spends so much time there. The school provides the structure whereby reading becomes routine, and the teacher can offer expertise, tailor methods to the individual and can make reading fun.

If the child chooses to read at home, the reading activity will be an important part of the day; the choice of book is not very relevant. Parents can offer individual attention (which may not be available at school), a variety of reading

situations and confidence; it is essential to avoid comparison and competition between children.

Felicity has always been keen on books and hearing stories and is motivated to learn; she enjoys writing her own name and copying words. The parents are happy for Felicity to set her own pace and are confident that she will become a proficient reader without problems.

From experience of reading problems with their older daughter, Felicity's parents recognise the importance of being able to read for self-esteem and within the peer group; this motivates them to help Felicity. The school's expectation of parental help (and the implied discipline imposed by the PACT system) is a strong influence; Miranda doubts that they would help without it.

There are plenty of materials and time available to Felicity; she reads with her parents or nanny every day from her school book for about five minutes. Apart from that she has her own story books and a home reading scheme which are read to her or which she reads if she wishes, she may play simplified scrabble or watch a video which is part of a home reading scheme. She is also interested in reading notices or food packets.

The directions in the PACT notebook are very general; the parents make comments to indicate that Felicity has read, but think the comments stilted. They would prefer to be asked to do more specific tasks and think they would get more information from meetings with the teacher; however, they cannot usually attend as they are often at inconvenient times for working parents. Miranda thinks the school should be responsible for giving appropriate information if parents are to help with reading.

Reading aloud

There was no recording, but the interview indicated that Miranda would encourage a number of strategies to help

Felicity to identify words. They might consider initial sounds or the picture and guess; Miranda might read from the beginning of the sentence and ask Felicity to suggest from the meaning or she might supply a word and hope that Felicity would remember it in future.

Felicity at school

Felicity is in the same class as Lee; she seemed shy at school and a little awed by more boisterous members of the class but gradually became willing to discuss her work. She was usually observed quietly working on tasks that were given to her. Maggie considers Felicity is doing well in reading having started school far ahead of other children, being able to read simple books with some word for word accuracy. So she expects Felicity to identify some words in the books she chooses. However, she does not regard Felicity as a book lover (she is "off-hand" about choosing books) and feels that she reads because it has been expected of her at home.

The development of reading at school

Maggie regards the home as supportive of her reading aims and believes that the parents understand the system as they have experience of an older child in the school.

Reading aloud

Felicity chose two books with repetitive formats. The first one had the pattern:

" ... See my elbow, see my knee,
See a monster, that's me! "

The second one was based on repetitive dialogue

"Titch needed some new trousers.
'You can have my old trousers - they're much too small for me.'
'They're too big for me.'
'You'll soon grow into them Titch.'

Felicity obviously knew the books well (Maggie believes this helps reading) and read them very quickly. On the few occasions that she hesitated Maggie shared the reading with her and supplied a phrase or word. Maggie did what she

described earlier for a child like Felicity who reads regularly at home, i.e. spent a short time talking about the title and the story, praised Felicity for her reading and encouraged her to take the book home for a further reading.

Comparing home and school

Felicity said she liked a lot of the books she read but liked reading easy ones best. She liked reading to both her mother and teacher and she liked them to read her stories. She did not know who she liked to help best if she did not know a word, but said that she did not get muddled.

From the data available, there would not appear to be any major differences the adults' approaches to reading or in the way that Felicity is helped with reading at home and school. Maggie said that she did not think that Felicity experienced any difficulties transferring from one system to the other because the parents understood the school system and would be doing the same at home.

This is entirely at variance with what Miranda reported; obviously, she knows that Felicity reads and writes at home, but has

"absolutely no idea how they are handling it"
at school and says

"I don't know what they're expecting parents to do ...
I've no idea at all."

She thinks this is part of a serious communication problem that lies within the school. She considers the onus is on the school to involve parents by communicating information about the class in general, what is to happen each term and stages the child is going through in learning to read; moreover, communications should be at the convenience of the many working parents in the school and the school should take responsibility for failures. Miranda feels that, in general, schools are too ready to make parents feel guilty about difficulties their children are having in school, instead of examining their own practices and responsibilities.

Parent and teacher said that Felicity was progressing in literacy. Her mother said that as far as she could judge Felicity did not experience any difficulties in transferring from school to home, nor did the teacher think there were any difficulties. However, there do seem to be difficulties of communication between the school and home.

THE SIX-YEAR-OLDS

CASE 9

Matthew at home

Matthew is six and lives with his mother and nine year old sister in a local authority flat within walking distance of the school. He seems a quiet boy and a relaxed atmosphere in the home is valued by the mother who is happy for Matthew to enjoy his own choice of activities when he returns from school; sometimes he does some reading and writing at home. His mother finds herself busy as she is a part-time worker in a play group in addition to looking after the needs of her home and family. Although they live as a single parent family, the children have contact with their father.

Parental beliefs and practices relating to literacy development

Hayley believes the school is the place where the main learning takes place. She feels strongly that it is the school's job to teach Matthew reading, spelling and writing correctly, and the home's job to help by reinforcing this. This is largely because she thinks that the school has the materials and the professional expertise and experience to give a structure to learning to read. The structure can provide the order in which to learn the important skills, can capitalise on the interest in reading that has been there since pre-school days and can arouse an interest in and a reason for carrying out literacy tasks and projects (such as making topic books). She believes the same structured approach for Matthew at home would not be appropriate.

Matthew occasionally brings a book home that he can read aloud and if this is the case he usually knows it well and

reads it quickly in a minute or two. Hayley believes this will help his reading development by providing an opportunity for practising what he has learned and for asking questions about words. If the child already knows the story this will help him to recognise words and it helps to bring books that he can attempt to read for himself.

If Matthew does come across a word he does not know he will ask and usually will be told it; if his mother has the time and they are both in the right mood she will ask him to try sounding the word. Hayley believes that reading involves both remembering and recognising words and also being able to relate sounds to letters to work out words. This is the starting point for reading, which Hayley considers is a combination of a number of skills. She was especially pleased when Matthew demonstrated these skills (and his interest) in a great leap in reading development. She explains how he read a book he made at school;

" ... he read it out to me, like 'This is a fish' ... before that it was 'Once upon a time there was' ... it was one of those little things, ... drawing a picture, putting a name to it and putting that in a sentence. And to point to each word as you read it - it's like a million skills all wrapped up in one."

Hayley knows that they could produce similar books at home, but they do not do so, preferring to wait for the next one to be brought home from school.

Matthew as a reader in the wider world outside of primary school and in his adult life is something that Hayley values and helps with reading because she sees literacy as an integral part of life, necessary for opportunities regardless of Matthew's eventual career. Being a competent reader will also help Matthew to cope with secondary schooling

" ... it's one less thing to worry about, you have enough to worry about when you go to secondary school."

but she foresees no particular problem, and expects Matthew to become a competent reader in his own time. Hayley believes it is important to relate reading learned at school to

everyday experiences so that it has relevance; she believes that Matthew absorbs information about reading that is important for him from all around him.

Matthew more often brings home a book for his mother (rather than himself) to read and he enjoys this, and especially likes the pictures. Being read to is an opportunity for Matthew to ask questions about what words and sounds say and how to read - Hayley encourages these questions hoping that Matthew will absorb the information and use it when reading himself.

Matthew does some writing at home; his teacher has suggested that he can improve his pencil control by tracing over writing and he does this sometimes. Otherwise, he may either dictate a sentence and copy under the writing, ask for spellings and perhaps write a note or card; he only likes to tackle small pieces of writing as his mother describes:

"He wanted me to write 'This is the creature club' - that was too big - he didn't want me to tell him (the sounds), he just wanted me to write that so he could copy it ... if it's too big he doesn't want to know - if it's just little, like 'a dog' or 'James' then he'll do it.

There is an expectation on the part of the school that the parents will help with reading; however, Hayley believes she lacks the expertise of the teacher, saying she does not know much about learning to read. She thinks the best help she can give is relating reading to real-life situations (rather than, for instance, making a book with him); however, she says such help tends to be rather disorganised. She can also give and support the basic interest necessary for learning; it is appropriate only for her to help in a relaxed manner that makes reading pleasurable (rather than a task that has to be done).

Individual attention is important in the early stages of learning to read, and Hayley thinks that it is useful to give this to Matthew, especially as not much individual help is available at school. However, she does feel that she should only help up to a certain point, both as a matter of

principle and for reasons of time. She could involve Matthew in more literacy activities but chooses not to; she feels she has enough responsibilities, and that school is the place to learn. She helps with books from school only as much as Matthew wants and says she probably would not help more even if the school put pressure on her.

Psychology of participants

Hayley's feelings about the effect of pressure, are central to her thinking about helping with reading - the aspect that appears to influence her most in offering a curriculum.

Matthew's personality, including his ability and inclinations, is something by which Hayley is also influenced when she considers helping him with reading at home. Regarding his ability, she knows that he is not as quick as his sister was at reading but does not regard this as a problem (either now or for the future), she simply sees it as a difference in personality.

Hayley believes motivation to be important; however she thinks there is no particular need to motivate Matthew in general as he knows how important it is to become a reader. The motivation to read on a particular occasion must come from within Matthew; for her to attempt to motivate or interest him might be regarded as pressure. To work against the child's particular wishes or abilities Hayley sees as applying pressure, for instance persuading Matthew to read if he does not seem keen, asking him to bring books home more often or asking him to try again or a bit harder to identify a word. She perceives Matthew to be happy as he is, and expects him to continue to be so as long as he has a sympathetic teacher. Matthew sometimes finds concentrating difficult and his mother recognises this and thinks that children will only do what they want, so in the end pressure is useless. However, she sometimes wonders if a little pushing might help him to progress, but thinks that the school and not herself should do the pushing.

Hayley is also aware that her own moods affect how much help she can offer; this is often linked to the time she has available and sometimes feels that organising the time to help would be an unacceptable pressure on herself that she just does not want. She says she might be more inclined to help more if the school put more pressure on her, but on the whole thinks that she would resist this. She values having a little time to herself;

" ... I was going to sit over the park for half an hour and read my book to myself. The teacher said 'Do you want to do some reading?' I said 'No, I was going to do some of my own' ... I could have said yes, but I've got so little time, I chose me instead. ... But I know there are other times when I could help and be involved but I don't."

Social influences

Matthew is a child of a society and a member of a school which expects parents to be involved in their children's education, and this is an underlying influence on Hayley in providing a home curriculum. Matthew also belongs to a society that has amongst it many working single parents like Hayley and this has practical repercussions that influence the time that can be spent on helping at home.

Matthew does not experience the pressure Hayley perceives other parents to be putting on children to achieve; if she is influenced at all by other parents in her social group it is in a negative way. She feels their pressure on their children is undesirable, as are the comparisons they sometimes make between children's reading ability. Particularly undesirable are their complaints about present day standards in state education and their expectation that children can achieve things at earlier ages. Her rejection of pressure and feeling that inner motivation is the important thing for the child is not just for Matthew's sake, she disagrees with it in general and expresses it very clearly and forcibly in terms of her personal experience of parents in her nursery

" ... why aren't we teaching them to write their name in nursery ... there's children in the nursery who don't want to write their names and that's that! They are not interested - they're only two and a half, three and a half. They don't want to sit down and think what it looks like. I don't

think they have to, because in another year they'll want to write their names."

Although she sometimes feels other parents expect her to think as they do, she resists their pressure.

Practical aspects

With both an outside job and a household to manage, time to fit in everything is a challenge for Hayley. She would like to help Matthew in a relaxed atmosphere, but this is difficult to achieve with so many demands on her time. The normal time for reading is bedtime although sometimes his mother is more concerned with him settling down to sleep. Consequently, she tends to let the reading and changing of books slip, and Matthew only reads to her perhaps once in two weeks. The supply of books is not entirely satisfactory; Matthew could use the family's own books, although he has read or heard most of these several times and the family has not bought any new ones recently. Matthew chooses his own books from school to read at home although he uses a reading scheme at school and did bring such books home early on. His mother might like him to use a scheme at home so they could both see clear progress, but would not like it if it meant pressure to progress onto the next book.

Matthew's reading experiences at home are limited by availability of time; his mother is reluctant to set aside more time for helping as this would mean unwelcome responsibility and undue pressure on herself. When Matthew reads at home it has usually been instigated by the school and directions about helping might be expected. While there is a general expectation on the part of the school and the home that books be taken home by the children, Hayley says there are no specific instructions about helping. A sheet was sent with the PACT folder early on which she has not retained. As Matthew is the second child she has some knowledge about how to help, although he is very different from his older sister.

Hayley would like more specific instructions, for instance

there are confusions about using upper and lower case and sounds and names of letters, but she relies on what Matthew tells her is done at school rather than asking the teacher. She is slightly wary of interfering,

" ... There's all this business about ay, bee, see or ah, buh, cuh, I don't actually know what the school does ... I don't like to ... interfere ... I go along with Matthew ... "

Asked if she would feel it was interfering to ask the teacher whether she uses capitals or lower case letters or letter sounds or names she says:

"I wouldn't have felt it was interfering, I wouldn't have felt bad going to ask. It's one of those things you never get round to doing - and if they actually told me it would be nice if you knew which way they were going to teach your child."

Individual interviews are the means of communication that Hayley has found most helpful (when she feels reassured that Matthew is doing alright) and would like more of them or longer sessions. When she sees his work in the classroom she is pleased that it seems to be fun and that he is producing satisfactory work.

She might find a sheet of instructions covering specific teaching points and stages of development useful and would like to know more about the various projects they are doing at school as it helps to be able to talk about them and find opportunities to relate written material to them; however, she does not think that she would find the time to go to a workshop or general talk.

Use of reading aloud

One of the advantages of children, including Matthew, reading at home is that the parents can give individual attention to the child and spend time discussing the story and pictures, according to Matthew's teacher. This individual attention, however, is rare for Matthew, as he may not choose to bring home a book, either to read himself or to have read, more than once in two weeks.

In the case of the recorded session, the term has just ended

and Matthew did not have a published school book, but was keen to read a book he had made himself. In a reading session which his mother indicated was typical, Matthew recited the book quickly and enthusiastically though not always accurately. She helped by pointing to the words, reading with Matthew as she pointed and giving him a phonic clue. All of these strategies seemed to help Matthew focus more on the words, and helped him identify them.

Matthew: Let's have this one. I begin with EM said the mirror ...

Mother: You know this one off by heart

Matthew: Yes. I begin with En said the watch

Mother: Wait a minute, I can't work it out. Where is it?

Matthew: It's there

Mother: I begin with ...

Matthew: EN said the watch

His mother named the letter for him.

Mother: Oh! Double u

Matthew: Double u - I begin with EN said the double u ...

Mother: wuh ... said ...

Matthew: ... the watch

Interestingly, his mother introduced the sound of the letter although she had previously given it's name following what Matthew had done, the usual practice according to the interview. Giving the sound to help Matthew identify the word.

Mother: Try again

Matthew: I begin with wuh said the watch

Mother: Well done ...

In this case, asking him to try again was apparently not regarded as putting any pressure on Matthew, it did give him the opportunity to read the whole sentence accurately, reinforcing what he read. She praised him (something she does did not mention as being important in the interview.)

He was then offered a selection of books by the researcher, (similar to those noted in school that he could bring home) and invited to choose one. He was at first reluctant then agreed that his mother would read it and he might help her.

Remarking on his reluctance, Hayley said

" Like this sort of thing - if I had to try too hard ... to help him get it right, this is how he gets ... too much pressure, its takes the enjoyment out of it."

Despite this "pressure" put on Matthew, they continued the reading session and Matthew became more interested in the story .

PC: Do you know what happens in that story Matthew?

Matthew: The turnip grows too big and they can't pull it out (Turning pages and looking at the pictures).

Mother: The enormous turnip. This old man has some turnip seeds

Matthew: Then I read it back to you. This old man ...

Mother: Do it by the words

Matthew: (pointing) This old man, he has ...

Matthew's mother has encouraged him to point to the words to help him focus, and this is something she did not mention previously.

Mother: has ... (word cue)

Matthew: some turnip seeds

He repeats after his mother, but he is not always accurate. For example:

Mother: The old man says 'I want some turnip for dinner'.

Matthew: The old man said he wants some turnip for dinner. His mother points and indicates for him to do so and he focuses his attention and reads accurately

Mother: (pointing) I ... want ... (word cue)

Matthew: (pointing) some turnip for dinner.

His mother reads most of the sentence then points to the last word for Matthew, which he supplies:

Mother: He pulls and pulls, but he can't pull up the enormous ...

Matthew: turnip

His mother now recognises his growing enthusiasm and confidence and asks him to do a little more, using a sound clue as she has said she might if their moods were favourable.

Matthew: He ... what is it again?

Mother: ... Try

Matthew: He ... he ...

Mother: Remember you said you could do all the sounds?

He ... p

Matthew: pulls and pulls and ...

Mother: b ... (phonic analysis)

Matthew: but he still can't get it ...

Mother: p ... pull (phonic analysis then provides)

Matthew: pull it up

Mother: (pointing) the

Matthew: enormous turnip!

At this point in the book the number of lines on the page doubles from three to six and Matthew does not want to tackle the reading.

Matthew: He's pulling .. I can't read that bit now.

Later on, he was asked about this:

PC: You said 'I don't want to read that.' Do you remember?

Why did you say that?

Matthew: Because it was too hard, that bit.

PC: Why was it too hard?

Matthew: It's too long to read.

So Matthew prefers to tackle only short bits of text when reading aloud, as his mother described previously in relation to writing.

His mother continues reading without putting any pressure on him to try, and he gradually becomes confident enough to join in again, even though the text on each page lengthens. He joins in with his mother at the end of phrases when she pauses slightly and she said she thought this was because he recognised the repetition in the text and was familiar with the words

Asked if she was conscious of almost always pointing to and pausing at the words 'the enormous turnip' and asked why she did this she said

"I don't think I was (conscious) actually ... I suppose I do it just for him to recognise. It's the

easiest thing to remember and it's always at the end of the page."

In this session his mother helped Matthew to read in a number of ways; she did not pressure him if she thought he was reluctant, but successfully urged him to try to identify words when she felt he was more confident. She praised and helped the identification by supplying the initial sounds, by pointing to focus his attention and by picking out the most frequent and salient words in the hope that he would remember and recognise them, although she had previously only mentioned that she helped with sounding and by telling.

The session is different to how she described normal practice in the interview; her thinking apparently does not match her behaviour in delivery of the curriculum. The impression she gave in the interview was one of a child who did not easily get involved in reading aloud himself and liked only to be read to. Yet he read two books with obvious enjoyment and made considerable effort to read what he could. Hayley says she knows little about the technicalities of reading yet in the recorded reading session demonstrated a high level of competence in involving Matthew in the reading in a pleasurable way, encouraging him to read what he could by a number of different strategies; she obviously underestimates her abilities. Matthew enjoyed the pictures and both responded to his mother's comments and added his own comments about what was happening. Parent and child read in harmony, allowing each other to take the lead according to what was judged appropriate at the moment.

Summary of the home curriculum

For Matthew, the home curriculum is a very child centred one in that his mother believes that his motivation and inclinations are of the greatest importance. Matthew only occasionally gets intensely interested in stories, he does not bring books home very often, nor is he particularly keen to read or have read his own books. His mother is very concerned to avoid pressuring him preferring to leave the initiative to him and Matthew is likely to be helped at his

own pace if he wants to read a book or to be read a story.

In so far as he does any reading, he and his mother are largely influenced by the school's expectations and Matthew reading aloud to his mother is the main activity. However, the way he is helped is dependent on his mother's initiative rather than on school instructions. Though she does not help Matthew with reading very often, when she does it is with a high level of competence. Apart from reading a book aloud, he does some environmental reading and some writing of his own choice, and his mother thinks this useful and relevant. Hayley has plenty of sound ideas about the processes involved in learning to read based on the idea of reading as the coming together of a number of skills and Matthew can be helped in many ways by his mother with reading at home. However, finding time to help and availability of books that he wants to read are limiting factors, and his mother does not like to feel that she is under pressure to help him read.

Matthew at school

Matthew appears a quietly-spoken boy at school, apparently not as assertive as other boys in the class; he seems to be keener on play than work, and sometimes appears rather in a dream in the classroom in which case he may be slow to complete a piece of work given to him. Matthew is in Year 1 and Melissa is his young teacher in a large primary school. The school is well kept and attractive with displays; there is a lively, friendly atmosphere amongst staff and pupils.

Teacher's beliefs and practices relating to literacy development

Melissa believes that in learning to read children both remember "pictures" of words and can use sounds from the word to help identification. She believes that to learn to read children need to understand and distinguish between spoken language and book language and hearing stories helps them connections between the two. In the early stages of learning to read, she believes that children rely a lot on remembering and repeating a story eventually memorising some words which

they can later recognise; hearing stories helps them do this especially if, as they often do, they choose to read one of the books that she has read aloud. When reading aloud, Melissa pointed to the pictures and text, to demonstrate the connection between the written and spoken word. Melissa reads stories aloud at least once a day and would like more time for what she considers an essential activity; hearing stories, she thinks, helps children's reading by motivating them to want to read.

Melissa believes that enjoying books is important and being able to read oneself adds to the pleasure. Matthew sometimes has the opportunity to choose books freely either to read to himself or with friends and this is important, especially at the early stages, for gaining confidence in reading, being motivated to want to read and gaining a sense of being as a reader.

Melissa thinks word identification skills have a place in early reading but that having confidence as a reader is more important and she focuses on this in teaching reading. Melissa values her own professional skills in teaching literacy, her strength is in knowing a variety of ways to approach literacy for different children, especially where developmental writing is concerned. She feels that the structure the school provides in terms of materials and organisation are important and obviously most homes could not provide this. Other children are also very important because individuals are motivated to achieve results like their peers and because other children provide listeners for an individual's reading aloud (pairs and groups were observed reading on a number of occasions). These listeners, she says, are almost as good as a teacher, particularly if a child chooses a book that s/he can read without much help; their reading will then help them to gain confidence, enable them to enjoy being heard and enable them to display their skills.

Melissa does not think there is any mystique attached to helping children become readers. She believes that most

parents could teach their children to read and write (some already do) if they had the time to learn enough about it. But she thinks that often the way they teach is based very much on their own limited learning experiences, as opposed to an experienced teacher who has gained experience from having taught many children using different methods.

Sometimes parents do not value early reading skills and find it difficult to understand why their children are not already fluent readers; they sometimes give their children the impression that they can't read. Melissa sees herself as a communicator whose ideas and methods need to be explained to parents so that they will value their child's achievements and help them effectively and understand that the child's confidence in reading (especially in the very early stages) is perhaps more important than their reading ability. She tells parents:

" ... it's better for their confidence, than being able to read really, as long as they believe they're reading they are that far ahead .. they'll probably get there ... "

Melissa believes parents helping with reading depends on the individual's desire and availability of time. Melissa does not consider any of her parents to be "pushy", and is pleased about this as she has found from experience that such parents are in danger of discouraging children from reading. What most parents can do is help children enjoy books by reading to and with them. Parents can be particularly useful where the child needs a little extra help and in general can compensate for the teacher's lack of time to read stories; they can give valuable individual attention to talking about the stories and the pictures for which the teacher usually does not have the time. While Melissa believes that most children will learn to read eventually, she is sure that the ones who are most advanced are those who have had a lot of stories read to them, have had books discussed with them and have had the opportunity to create their own stories at home since the pre-school period.

Psychology of participants

In Melissa's class, children are at very different stages of development, have different abilities and have different life experiences which she believes affect their achievements. Melissa takes these factors into account and values whatever the child has achieved so far and aims to build up his/her skills, using her general approach to reading, at the child's individual pace.

Matthew is the least able reader of the three children studied from Melissa's class; Melissa describes him as a beginner reader. Observations showed him to be at a very early stage in both reading and writing being able to identify a few words, copy and form letters quite well and identify some initial sounds of words. For most children in the class, Melissa is very keen to encourage developmental writing and encourages children to spell phonetically; she does not insist on correct spelling and may either point out the conventional spelling if it is a common word or write the sentence conventionally below the child's writing after the child had finished. But exactly what she does depends on the individual; in Matthew's case, he was observed trying to write the first sounds of words without reference to the teacher's writing, but resorted to copying most of the sentence which Melissa accepted as a good try.

Melissa dislikes the idea of applying pressure, especially if it is from home, as she thinks this often causes the child to lose interest and confidence (the important factors in learning). Given a conducive atmosphere, she thinks most children enjoy reading, including reading aloud; as all children will become proficient readers (given time) the experience of learning should be fun. She expects Matthew to become a reader in time though she says he is not keen on reading and does not perceive himself as a reader yet. Consequently, she works slowly with him setting simple tasks and accepting what work he can do.

Social influences

Melissa's thinking about literacy is in line with the school

policy on literacy - a comprehensive document which provides a guideline concerning how to teach, what is expected and what to provide for the children in the classroom. Regarding the National Curriculum, she complies but she says

"you can't get around them".

In Matthew's school there is a general expectation that parents will help with reading, but Melissa thinks it is important to understand the parent's expectation of learning to read which may vary with their cultural background and social circumstances; she says she tries to accommodate and incorporate these in asking parents to help. However, while she thinks Hayley is short of time for helping, she would like her to arrange her commitments so that she could help more. Melissa feels that Matthew needs extra help and support from home if he is to progress, particularly as he misses school time, for example by taking term-time holidays. Melissa would like Matthew's mother to help by reading to him and encouraging him to read aloud what he can on a regular basis saying:

" I've got the feeling that she's got so much to do that she hasn't got much time to do much at home with him. And I've got the feeling that a bit of the reason why he's not progressing as fast as he could is because he's not really getting the support at home."

Socio-ethnic groups to which the children belong have an influence; this is especially so where English is not the first language and may not be very highly developed either in the home or in the child. Melissa realises that this will be limiting if the child cannot express everything s/he wishes or if the child attempts to read a word unfamiliar in spoken language. Ideally, Melissa would like children to have the opportunity to become completely literate in their mother-tongue, so they have the chance to express themselves fully in reading and writing; however, resources are limited although there is some scope in school for reading in other languages.

Practical aspects

Melissa has little help in the classroom (at present she gets one session per week) and would like more; she would like more time for helping with reading as she never really has as much time as she would like for listening. She would like it if she could be freed to devote more time to writing. Melissa would like the opportunity to attend courses on developing writing, especially where they involve ideas to motivate children and help them enjoy writing. Melissa says parents are generally unable to help in the classroom because they don't have the time.

If parents ask for particular information on ways to help Melissa will give this to them, otherwise she uses the PACT notebooks to make general comments about progress and enjoyment. Usually she does not give specific instructions to parents on how to help. She would not normally send a book from the reading scheme home; parents are expected to hear the child reading a book s/he can read well. If a child cannot read the book s/he has chosen to bring home she would ask the parents to read it to him/her or read those parts the child cannot manage. Asked if she tells parents exactly how to help with difficult words Melissa explains:

"No, I don't actually let the parent know that the child can read it before I feel that the child is confident in reading. Usually, if they take a book home that I know they can read ... I usually ask ... "Do you want to read it to mum?" ... and if they say "No" ... I would never interfere with this and say "This child can actually read a book". I would rather give him another chance to read it in class and then they can take it home and feel that yes, he can read it to mum ... so we've got an agreement that we don't tell mum until he actually feels he can read the book."

As there are few books Matthew can read without help, he would normally be taking a book home for his mother to read to him.

Melissa is not so limited by space as some teachers in the study. She makes use of the space she has to create attractive places for reading activities. Matthew's classroom has display areas attractively used for children's work which are at a reasonable level for children to read. Wall displays include books made up of the teacher's captions and the

children's writing on class projects and stories, which Melissa reads or encourages children to read during the day. There is a variety of literacy materials for use throughout the day. There is a good supply of books in the classroom and library; a reading scheme is used for the beginner readers and there are plenty of attractive picture books at varying levels for children to use when they finish the scheme. Children use work sheets for maths and language, may use cards with prompts for the beginning of stories and taped stories to listen to, some with matching books, which the child will read in the course of the day.

Use of reading aloud

Melissa hears reading aloud between once and three times a week for about 5 or 10 minutes. She would hear the least advanced readers like Matthew most often, but would hear the better readers for longer, especially if they chose a longer book. Melissa uses the reading scheme "One, two, three and away" flexibly; many children in her class will have finished with it and will be choosing books freely from a suitable range of story-picture books, while others prefer the security of the scheme and do not transfer to the free-choice books until teacher and child agree s/he is ready. Melissa explains

" Some of them prefer to stay on the reading scheme because they feel safe, some feel they don't need the scheme any more and want to choose, so I let them decide what they feel they are comfortable with."

Amongst the least able readers there are some children who recognise some words but still need to master such basics as connecting one sound with one letter or letter group and understanding that a group of letters are equivalent to a word. Melissa uses the child reading aloud as an opportunity to teach or reinforce this. According to the individual's stage of development, she may supply the initial sound and the word in the hope that they will identify the word themselves the next time or she may supply or ask the child for the initial sound and ask him or her to guess the word

from that. Later the child might be able to use more sounds (the final sound, or middle sounds if quite advanced) and guess the word. Melissa relies heavily on the sounds of words for identification, and would usually expect a guess to be linked to the context using the picture or the general sense.

Matthew is using the very early books to read aloud with his teacher and Melissa prefers to work slowly with him to help him gain confidence. He is at the early stages of relating sounds to letters and guessing. In the recorded session Matthew had a very simple book and recognised a few words; Melissa used cards to teach and reinforce the basic words of the scheme and asked him to identify the same words and sounds in his book.

The following is an example:

Melissa: Let's choose ... Now this one I know you know. What's on the picture?

Matthew: Roger ...

Melissa: Does it say anything? Look at the words please.

Matthew: This is Roger

Melissa: Does it say 'This is Roger'? Have a look at the words again. You know what it says.

Matthew: Roger ...

Melissa: What does that say?

Matthew: Roger Red Hat

Melissa: Yes, that's better. Which one is red? Which one says 'red'?

Matthew: (points)

Melissa: Which one says 'hat'?

Matthew: (points)

Melissa: How do you know that one says 'hat'?

Matthew: There's 'huh' at the front.

Melissa: There's a 'huh' at the front. That's right.

Matthew read a few sentences such as 'Roger has a red dog', 'Roger has a red bus' in a similar way pointing out individual words and sounds. Then Melissa introduced cards containing individual words which she asked Matthew to

identify and also point out in the book. She was helping Matthew to identify the words both within and outside the context and explained the activity as follows:

"Well I'm just trying to enforce the same words again. Trying to see if he can recognise them without a context and really, I don't mind if he uses the book to find the words, if he sort of uses the text ... if he remembers the text and finds the words that way. And some of them do that, then they find it's actually easier to remember the words than remembering the text. Then they get that step further. He's not always using the sound - he knows the letters and he knows the sound - but he can't always combine the two. So it's nice if you keep reinforcing the words with the cards and talking about 'what does that letter say'. And it's easier sometimes to see them here because they're much bigger. The writing is bigger - and it's one word - so you just look at the first letter. You don't get confused about which one you're talking about."

Asked whether it helped him when Melissa showed him the cards with the book he said

"Yes, it helped me, but sometimes it's hard to remember all the words".

Melissa was concentrating on recognition of words appropriate to Matthew's level of development. Although she had said that confidence and pleasure in reading were important at early stages Matthew did not seem to gain much pleasure or confidence from this particular session of reading aloud and appeared rather restless. In general, observations showed that Matthew seemed to find it difficult to focus and keep his attention on literacy tasks even for two or three minutes. Matthew enjoys having stories read aloud to him according to both his teacher and to observations, and when questioned said that he likes both being read to and reading aloud, though he found the latter quite hard.

Summary of the school curriculum

Matthew has opportunities for experiencing varied literacy materials at school in a lively classroom atmosphere. The literacy curriculum Matthew's teacher plans is one in which, at the early stages, confidence and pleasure in reading and writing are more important than word identification and spelling skills. Matthew, however, seems to take little

pleasure in literacy activities in general, and finds it difficult to remember and identify words when reading; so far he has made only a little progress. The reading session recorded which focused on identifying words in a text and on cards was said by Matthew's teacher to be typical, she did not indicate that she takes other approaches such as shared reading with him. Melissa accepts the work that Matthew does, believing that it is important to take individual differences in ability, background and out of school experiences into account and value every effort a child makes.

Partly because of the shortage of time and help in the classroom and partly because she believes that most parents can help with reading, Melissa would like to see parents reading with children and listening to them read regularly. This could be seen as an extension to the school curriculum, although she does not normally instruct parents on how to help unless they ask specifically. Otherwise she would expect them to read stories or hear the child reads books s/he reads well.

She thinks this is particularly important to accelerate the progress of the slower readers like Matthew, and expresses frustration that Matthew is not helped more at home.

Comparing home and school

The literacy experiences Matthew has at home and school are very different. At school he experiences a wide range of activities and materials on a daily basis, whereas at home the experiences are limited to reading aloud, hearing stories and a little writing occasionally. The experiences of reading aloud, of which the recorded sessions were typical, at home and school were very different. At school Matthew is one of 30 children any of whom may interrupt him when he is reading (though this was not a very big problem during observation) whereas at home he is likely to get almost undivided attention. His teacher says that confidence and pleasure in reading are more important than correct word identification in the early stages, though when he read aloud at school he

was expected to identify words correctly using a book and individual word cards; he seemed not to like this much. It appears he is expected to read when asked and does not have the opportunity to refuse. His mother sees reading as a coming together of word identification skills. When his mother heard Matthew read they shared the reading of a book that he liked, he read what he could while his mother read the rest. At home the choice to read will be his and he is likely to read aloud from texts that he knows well from practising at school.

Matthew can tell his mother when she helps with reading if she is doing anything different from his teacher, and has the freedom to decline to read at home if he wants to. Asked about his preferences he said he likes the books he has at home and school, and likes it best when he reads to his mother and likes her to help him to read. He says he does not like it when his teacher asks him to point to the words and read them because sometimes they are too hard. But when asked, Matthew, his teacher and his mother said that the two systems do not seem to cause any confusion or conflicts for Matthew. It appears that Matthew knows what is expected of him at school and can cope with the demands, making an effort even when he does not enjoy it; at home he may cope by declining to read.

There is an element of conflict between home and school in the perception of Matthew's achievements and progress. Hayley is happy with Matthew's progress and if she ever worries that he could be doing more, she is reassured when she talks to his teacher and sees the work that the class is doing. Melissa is less happy with Matthew's progress, seeing him as a very beginner reader at six years old and feeling that he could achieve more especially if he was helped and supported at home.

And there are differences between what the teacher and parent expects the home to contribute. The teacher thinks that regular help from home is absolutely essential if Matthew is

to become a competent reader; the mother thinks that the job of teaching lies firmly with the school and she is willing to help with reading aloud only if Matthew chooses to bring home a book (for either of them to read) and if he is willing to use it. Hayley sees her main contribution as helping Matthew apply what he has learned at school to the real world always supposing that he has learned at school.

There are some difficulties in communication between parent and teacher in this case. Melissa has only a limited time for parent interviews and tries to get information across during talks to parents on a casual basis. And although Hayley acknowledges that information is given to her at those times she does not find it very helpful, preferring the more formal occasions saying:

" It is all communication, and the time and the place when you're communicating. Because the teachers might say a lot to you ... at half past three ... by the time you've got home and you're getting the tea ready it's gone out of your head ... it's a bit airy-fairy."

She has considerable insight of her own shortcomings in seeking information;

"The more you know about the school, if I do know what's going on ... like they were doing sewing, making things - because I knew that was happening I could talk to him about it - that sort of opens up new fields ... but half the time I don't and half of that's my own fault - well a third - a third is time and a third is the school."

Asked why she says it's her fault Hayley replies:

"Because I've got the time but I don't use it. I mean, I haven't always got the time, but sometimes when I do, I don't use it when maybe I should."

Melissa does not indicate at all that she is aware of these difficulties in communicating and could perhaps get more of the needed help from Hayley if she was aware.

While Matthew seems to accept the two systems there are conflicts within the adults concerning Matthew and his progress. Melissa says that she takes into account the child's social or cultural circumstances and the parent's expectation of learning to read. She realises that Hayley as

a single working parent is very short of time for helping but still wishes that she would help more and attributes Matthew's slow progress to lack of support at home, at least to some extent. Hayley is not quite sure what Matthew needs to help him; she feels some ambivalence concerning the rate of progress. She appreciates the relaxed atmosphere in the school in general, and although she is adamant that neither she nor Matthew likes pressure she does sometimes wonder if he goes unnoticed;

"I sometimes think it might be too relaxed because I'm relaxed here. I want them to do the bit of pushing he might need. You know ... I don't want to do it."

Although Hayley says she would resist pressure to help from the teacher, she also says that she would like more information about the order of learning and more detailed instructions to follow herself. She also thinks that she might prefer a more structured reading scheme, so long as it did not entail pressure to move on at too rapid a pace. She says she finds the present approach a bit "wishy-washy".

The teacher gives the impression that she thinks that Hayley is simply rather lackadaisical and does not seem to consider that Hayley has definite reasons for not helping (to do with the idea that school should provide the teaching on principle plus the fact that she is short of time). Hayley shows herself to be a highly competent helper with reading aloud - it is a pity that Matthew cannot experience more of this aspect of the curriculum (at home and school) and perhaps make the progress of which his teacher thinks he is capable.

CASE 10

Sue at home

Sue is nearly six, a bright and lively girl, who lives with her parents, three year old sister and grandmother in a local authority flat in a very mixed area, about 25 minutes walk from the school. Betty, Sue's mother, does not work outside the home. The family has been in Britain for about six years, and though her mother speaks good English, this is not the

first language at home. Sue is bilingual and her mother teaches her reading and writing in her first language.

The development of reading at home

Betty values learning and believes children learn to read and spell by sounding out, breaking words into syllables and building syllables into words. But because of the irregularities of English spelling, beginners must remember some whole words and be able to recognise them again. When Sue reads aloud there is the opportunity for Betty to correct her mistakes; when Betty reads aloud (at Sue's request) she shows Sue how to read and this helps Sue improve. Reading aloud is also for pleasure and sometimes to give information.

Betty thinks that school is the best place to learn as the teacher is expert in teaching reading and writing and school provides peers who can help children to learn. She thinks the school should concentrate on literacy and aim for a high standard. She believes parents can help and devises activities in reading, spelling and writing in English and in their first language as opportunities arise; she can give Sue undivided attention which is probably missing at school.

Betty is not sure whether Sue is a keen reader because it seems she sometimes reads only because she feels she has to. Before school, she definitely disliked hearing stories which her mother thinks rather odd; she always preferred drawing and now likes drawing and writing (observations showed that this was quite advanced). Betty says Sue has difficulty spelling English. She would like Sue to do more work at home and progress faster; she recognises that Sue learns quickly when motivated so she does not like to pressure Sue if she is tired or reluctant (as she often is at the end of a school day); therefore, home teaching takes place at an optimum time for Sue.

Betty is influenced by her own cultural group; she believes that Sue would be more advanced in the family's country of origin and is therefore keen for her to progress. However,

she acknowledges that Sue will grow up in England and is willing to accept different standards, but would like to understand the education system and teaching methods better.

There is time for Sue to read aloud for ten or fifteen minutes each day if she feels like it; she uses school books although there are also some books available to her at home. She might also do some writing suggested by her mother and Betty provides her with books for spelling corrections and handwriting.

Reading aloud

Sue may be helped to read notices or anything else that interests her in the environment, but her main reading aloud is from books, often her own choice. Her mother said she generally expects Sue to sound out words but will supply the word if she fails, especially if she considers it is an irregular spelling; in the recorded example Betty helped in a number of ways.

Sue chose a story written in four-line verses and with some unusual words. She read without much help and used letter names to spell out difficult words. Betty supplied words as follows, explaining that she gave Sue the chance to try first, and then would correct her.

Sue: F..E..B..R..U..A..R..Y Feb ...

Betty: February (provides)

Sue: SP ... spec ...

Betty: Special (provides)

Sue: PE ... RL

Betty: Pearl

Sue then whispered the preceding months to herself until she arrived at "April" and identified it (mnemonic cue); her mother allowed her the time to do this.

Betty then corrected a word

Sue: September is the time for fright

Betty: fruit (provide)

Sue: fruit

and said

"Sometimes she confuses the "i" - she said
"fright" ... I had to correct her."

Sue read "who will" for "who'll", but Betty seemed unsure how to correct her.

Betty gave a word cue;

Sue: And look thought ...

Betty: And look ...

Sue: through

She pointed out a spelling pattern using letter names:

Sue: I am pack ...

Betty: Eye-en-gee (phonic analysis)

Sue: packing

Sue at school

Sue is in the same class as Matthew and so has similar experiences, although she is more advanced than him in literacy skills. She is an industrious member of the class and enjoys all her activities; she particularly likes writing, spells well and takes great pride in showing her written work and explaining what it is about. Observations showed some imperfect English grammar and Melissa says that her vocabulary is somewhat limited.

The development of reading at school

Melissa considers Sue the most advanced of the study children in literacy which she enjoys; she will often chose books rather than play. Melissa knows that Betty has high expectations of Sue and finds it difficult to accept that Sue can hardly be expected to be a fluent reader but is doing very well. Melissa acknowledges Betty's general support and her appreciation of the variety of experiences Sue has at school. She knows Betty teaches Sue to sound words at home; Melissa finds that this is not always helpful at school and

consequently is concerned to explain her thinking to Betty whenever she has the opportunity.

Reading aloud

When children read aloud, Melissa says she will help with difficult words in a number of ways. As is often the case, Sue chose to read a book that Melissa said was easy for her, consequently she needed very little help.

After allowing an initial try, Melissa provided "spindle" saying she thought Sue would not know the English word and needed to hear it; Melissa said sounding would not help in that particular case.

Sue read "dee" and Melissa provided "die" which Sue remembered on a subsequent reading.

Melissa used decoding/splitting a compound for "cannot" explaining

"I know she knows both the words when they are not together - she got confused, she thought it was one long word."

Sue thought this was helpful saying "I know 'can' and 'not'"

Comparing home and school

Melissa and Betty have quite different views about the process of reading; Melissa is concerned with the meaning of the text while Betty views reading as decoding words in isolation preferably using phonic skills. However, both use a variety of strategies to help with difficult words according to the structure of the word and whether they believe Sue knows the word. Both parent and teacher think that Sue is able to accept two approaches and is not confused by them.

From the adults' points of view, there seems to be a gap in communications. Melissa thinks Betty is generally supportive while Betty thinks the school's standards are low, but is willing to accept the situation. She says that Sue brings books home but she is not asked to help in any particular

way; she would like to know more about teaching methods so that she can understand better and help Sue in the same way.

Sue said she liked reading aloud but liked her spelling exercises at home better. She said she preferred to read to her teacher so she could chose shorter and easier books. She found it hard to understand questions about confusions, but said she did not like to be told difficult words especially by her mother because sometimes she said it wrong, for instance mispronouncing "o" in "monkey" and calling "apple" "napple". (Observations show that Betty has a strong accent and did mispronounce some words she supplied for Sue.)

CASE 11

Holly at home

Holly is six and a half; she is a bright and articulate girl living with her three year old sister and maternal grandmother in a housing-association renovated cottage in a fashionable area of London about 25 minutes walk from school.

Joan, Holly's maternal grandmother, has parented the children for four months and has indefinite care while the mother is ill. Both parents visit, though the impression was that the mother's visits tend to be rather fraught and disruptive. Joan is an extremely articulate and energetic person and is deeply concerned for the children's welfare. She is particularly enthusiastic about helping Holly (who is rather behind) with reading and regards helping as an opportunity to learn about a fascinating process. She does not work outside the home at present, but is involved in local projects and courses.

The development of reading at home

Joan sees books as an indispensable part of life, and sees reading as making sense of the world in general and of words in particular. An early reader needs a variety of skills to identify words; confidence to put skills into practice is important and a model selecting books and enjoying reading is helpful. Joan thinks that some sounding is necessary to

identify words, but this is not always helpful and some words need to be remembered by the child after being told them. Identification will be helped by guessing, looking at the picture and considering the context for clues. Joan also encourages the use of mnemonics (for example a drawing of a bed to distinguish "b" from "d") or discrimination of features such as double letters to help remember words.

When the child reads aloud there is the opportunity to help with and teach difficult words and to give feedback on correct reading; the child has the opportunity to gain confidence in putting skills into practice. The adult reading aloud is mainly for the pleasure of a bedtime treat but also helps motivate the child by communicating that reading is valued. There is sometimes the opportunity to point out features of words like double letters (e.g. flapped) and connections (e.g. light in lighthouse) which might help. But no amount of reading aloud will teach reading, as Joan has learned from experience with her granddaughter.

Joan thinks the teacher has the necessary professional skills for teaching reading and says Melissa has formed a special relationship with Holly which creates the conducive atmosphere that Holly needs to learn. Joan thinks that parents can help "as well as" not "instead of" the teacher and regards herself as amateur (knowing nothing of reading and having her first experience of helping). The parent has the advantage of knowing the child better and having a deeper relationship than can help to cater for the individual. Joan has strong reasons for helping; she was "shocked" to find that Holly, though intelligent, was virtually a non-reader when she moved into her grandmother's home and Joan was concerned to help, immediately asking the teacher's advice. But Joan also enjoys helping with and discovering reading processes; she finds the books she reads to the girls great fun and enjoys devising activities to help.

Although intelligent and articulate, with a good vocabulary, Holly is not as enthusiastic about books as her younger

sister Alice; she is not as discerning when choosing books and does not add as much to story-telling as Alice; Joan accepts that Holly may not choose to read even when she is capable.

Holly gets physically and mentally tired and Joan takes this into account and does not force sessions. Holly is able to negotiate positive reinforcement (e.g. a star chart for "good reading") and this ingenuity pleases Joan, but most of all she is excited that Holly has gained so much confidence in trying out skills and accepting errors. She believes this to be the most important factor for Holly's progress.

Social factors have little importance for Joan; her main concern for the future is that Holly should be able to share other people's experiences through literacy.

Holly borrows books and cassettes from the library, has books bought and brings home scheme books from school; Joan finds the language of the latter limited and Holly says they are boring, but Joan thinks the structured repetition is useful. Joan is very resourceful; she makes story books with the children, cuts out words from cereal packets to make sentences and asked for a copy of the checklist as it gave her ideas for literacy activities e.g. working out yogurt flavours. She says they do not use environmental print much, but it is likely to become useful in the future. Joan reads stories every night, but there is not as much time as Joan would like for hearing reading (about an hour a week) and arranging other literacy activities (also an hour). Joan says having two young children to care for is time and energy consuming and not without its disruptions; she thinks it is counterproductive if listening to reading becomes a burden when either Holly or herself is tired or reluctant. She prefers to give "quality" time (i.e. when she wants to attend without being preoccupied), even if only once a week.

Books are sent home by the teacher and this guides the reading although there are no specific instructions on how to

help; sometimes words associated with the book are sent home to learn. She would welcome ideas on how to help perhaps direct from the teacher or through parent groups (although she thinks the organising would be too time-consuming for the school.)

Reading aloud

In the recorded session Joan helped in a number of ways and demonstrates herself as a sensitive, patient and highly competent helper with a sense of humour; there was some praise although not lavish.

Holly prefers to focus on a small amount of text and so Joan will cover text if she thinks the amount will be discouraging.

She allows Holly time to "have a go" and thinks it is better if Holly can work a word out rather than be told it; however, she says she likes to keep frustration low and will supply a word rather than have Holly struggle too long with sounding. Joan says how she helps with difficult words depends on how she thinks the word is structured and how easily Holly will identify it.

Joan prompted Holly to split up and rebuild "this" (phonic analysis)

J: What's the "tee" "aich"?

H: "th"

J: And what sound after that?

H: "is"

J: Yes, so what is it?

H: ... this

Holly could not identify "came" so Joan read the first and last parts of the sentence to help:

J: What does that sound like ... "Well he ... up my hill" (word cue)

Holly looked at the picture and made a "good" miscue, "climbed"

J: No (negative feedback)

H: No ... cl ... came

J: That's right!

Joan explained why she had cued

"We skipped ... I wanted her to get some sense of it"

In identifying "came" Joan suggested that Holly had "a flash of inspiration".

She then suggested that Holly maybe has some sort of mental dictionary for storing and retrieving words saying

"She's really made a connection between seeing the word in front of her ... I wonder if that's one of those she's put up there"

Joan gave Holly time to grapple with "all" and then Joan supplied it explaining

"Well it's one of those you have to ... sort of learn ... because it hasn't ... its not like one with "ing" on the end, and you know that's "ing"

Joan provided the word "supper" and Holly repeated it. Joan pointed to the double letters commenting:

J: That's right, it's one of those we like isn't it?

H: No! You like it

When Holly did not identify "giants" Joan gave a word prompt;

"No, look at it there ... you've had that word ... just said it. Where else is it on the page?"

Holly then looked back, checked the letters one by one and Joan asked

J: What would it be without the "ess"? (phonic analysis)

H: Giant

Joan then remarked

"I experience her as being delighted when she gets that kind of thing - it's one of my pleasures, her delight"

Asked whether she likes to be told a word or to work it out herself, Holly said Melissa tells her words but she likes to work them out; she said it was hard to explain why but agreed

when Joan suggested that she got satisfaction from doing it herself.

Holly at school

Holly transferred to the school a few months ago and is in the same class as Matthew. She is a very lively and articulate girl, always pleased to talk about her work and activities. She is doing quite well in school work though is not so advanced a reader as Sue.

The development of reading at school

Holly came into the class very behind in reading and needed a lot of encouragement and experience of simple, graded books which Melissa was able to provide. Melissa is very pleased that she has gained a lot of important confidence in reading. Melissa is also pleased that the extra help she needs is available at home and she sends home suitable books (sometimes with specific instruction to concentrate on a particular aspect) for Holly to use at a pace that suits the family.

Reading aloud

Holly was recorded reading a simple book from the "1,2,3 and away" which she later said was easy as she could remember it. She showed pleasure in reading it with so little help and Melissa said this helps her to become more confident.

After Holly's initial attempt to sound out "tuh-oh-oh-kuh" (took) Melissa provided the word explaining

"Well she did try and spell it out herself ... and she started with 'tee' then you get the long sound of the 'ow', so I decided to tell her."

Melissa allowed Holly time to identify "town" after an initial hesitation and "fell down" having first read "fell over"; she praised her efforts saying "good".

Melissa provided the unfamiliar names Ramal and Sita either at Holly's request or after a short hesitation; she asked her to have another look at "on" having read "in" (word prompt).

Comparing home and school

Both Joan and Melissa feel home and school are in harmony. Both have a broad view of reading as important part of language and feel that confidence to put skills into practice is the most important aspect for Holly. They appreciate the work the other is doing, although Joan would be glad of more ideas about helping. They encourage Holly to use skills in similar ways, giving her time to work out words but not allowing her to become frustrated.

Neither Melissa or Joan believe that Holly experiences any confusion in transferring from home to school and Holly said she never gets muddled. She has no preference for who helps her but said that she likes to read best if the pictures can help her. Observations showed that she did rely on the pictures to give her clues looking at them often when reading aloud.

The comparisons described in this chapter are summarised in the next prior to discussion and evaluation of the work in the final chapter.

CHAPTER SIX SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

An overview of participants' ideas concerning acquiring literacy, common curricular practices in school and home and a comparison of schools and age groups and issues of transferring will be presented. It will be important to remember that, for the purposes of developing a research method, the sample was constrained to homes where literacy provision was relatively rich.

THE NATURE OF THE CURRICULA AND THEIR PLANNING

The main research questions were the nature of the curricula at home and school, how they were designed and how the curricula affected children; these questions have been answered by the research. Curricula planning and delivery could be described with the proposed model; parents and teachers were able to explain the different influences and their relative importance. Beliefs about literacy and how it could be learned were important influences on planning as was the psychology of the participants, especially their perceptions of their own roles in the learning process.

There were similarities between the curricula; concerning HCR and reading to children (which form an important part of literacy curricula), the intentions behind their planning and delivery were similar at home and school. In more general ways there were similarities, namely common views on the process of acquiring literacy.

However, there were also differences in curricula, both particular (as in the timing of when literacy activities are offered at home and school and in the relative importance of different types of print) and in general (as in the approach to skills-learning and the effect of the culture within the home and school). An overview of curricula is presented below with discussion of curricula differences.

COMPARING THE SCHOOLS AND AGE GROUPS

The five teachers were drawn from three schools; three of the

teachers employed similar teaching methods while the other two took a rather different approach. The nursery teacher and one reception teacher employed "shared reading" whereby a group of children or an individual child would read alone, or with the teacher according to how much of a particular book a child could read. The emphasis was on encouraging the child to choose his or her own book and contributing what s/he could according to his or her level of development. These teachers acknowledged that the child would need various skills to identify words, but there was no pressure for the child to identify words, the initiative being left to the child. Although the two classes were over a year apart in age the teachers employed similar methods and materials; obviously the reception class had children far more advanced than the nursery class and some reception children were readily identifying words. Two other reception teachers used "Breakthrough to literacy" and a reading scheme to teach a reading vocabulary; children practised or learned the vocabulary when reading their scheme book aloud and were expected to identify all words or remember for the next occasion if the teacher supplied a word. What was striking was the difference in attitude between the "sharing reading" reception teacher and the other two reception teachers regarding the use of phonics. The "shared reading" teacher thought five was too early for sounding to be of much use whereas the other two teachers asked children to use at least initial sounds and to try to use other sounds as well; a number of children in the class were observed doing so successfully and comfortably.

The Year 1 teacher used similar methods and materials to the two reception teachers although her class was a year older; some of the more advanced children were very competent readers, although the least able of her children in the study (C9) was in the very early stages of reading and found it difficult to identify words, especially when they were in isolation. In fact he enjoyed reading more with his mother who took a "shared reading" approach and might have benefitted if his teacher had done the same.

Any individual class had children at different stages in the reading process with classes overlapping but generally, classes illustrated a progression from sharing reading of the general meaning of a story with an adult and contributing as much as s/he could, to the expectation that the child would identify words correctly as s/he read.

SCHOOL CURRICULA

The literacy curricula in schools in the present study were similar to those which Tizard et al (1988) described. Reading schemes were used flexibly as the core of teaching reading, worksheets to practice literacy skills were used, "Breakthrough" was used to construct and read sentences and children spent some time each day reading alone, to an adult or other child from books, captions on the wall or occasionally from a computer. Small amounts of "news" or descriptions of topical events were written and read by children who progressed from tracing over writing to copying to writing without aids; developmental writing was not very popular. Teaching reading was largely orientated towards skills for identifying words. The teacher read stories, poems and rhymes to the children at storytime or read print in connection with work in progress.

The teachers' curricula were similar in that they all valued literacy very highly. It was taken for granted that literacy was a most important part of school life and teachers expected to spend a lot of time on it; there was an apparent underlying assumption that the majority of children would read and write (particularly continuous text) within the first few years of schooling, considerable parts of the school day being organised round this goal.

Differences between schools' curricula were in the teaching methods used according to a teacher's beliefs about how children learned to read (e.g. using visual channels, relying on the whole language experience etc.) and the timing of introducing different skills. School curricula were very much directed by the teacher, that is she (and not the child)

decided what was taught and when.

HOME CURRICULA

For all children, including those in the nursery class, the school curriculum intervened in the home as schools involved parents in school-directed helping. It was not easy to separate the effect of home and school, however parents indicated on the checklist that many literacy activities at home were definitely not suggested by school. On the whole the school only asked parents to read with the child the books sent home.

In so far as parents were able to recall the pre-school days, most parents described a home literacy curriculum that included reading stories, poems and rhymes to children, helping and encouraging children to choose and handle books, pointing out and answering questions about words either in books or in the environment and discussing books. Help was given with writing, from transcribing dictated sentences to giving spellings, for example to be used for accompanying pictures or writing notes and cards. A few children used a computer in connection with literacy. Most children enjoyed hearing stories, although several children preferred writing to trying to read themselves. Environmental print in the home, street or supermarket was important to children as it helped them see the relevance of reading.

Some children were reported to have recited from books or told the story with reference to the particular pictures or pages in their pre-school years and the two children from the nursery class did this often, although neither parents nor teacher considered this to be "reading". Although there is evidence in the literature of HCR at home that is not school prompted (Clarke, 1978), the parents in this study did not report that they heard children in the sense that the child reads aloud to an adult who helps the child to identify words correctly; HCR is added when schools involve parents.

The home curricula parents provided before school were rich

and varied and families continued with them after the child had started school. It seemed that literacy was allowed to "emerge" in most cases according to the pace set by the child; in all the research on home literacy referred to in Chapter 2, and in the present study, one point arises again and again; whatever parents offer, whether reading to children or helping pre-school children read and write is almost always done at the child's request and parents do not approve of pressure. Children undertook literacy activities if (and very often when) they wanted to; the curricula were in this way directed by the child. This was similar to the descriptions of Hannon and James (1990); Schieffelin and Cochrane-Smith (1984) and Clark (1978).

It was argued in Chapter 1 that home curricula described in the literature differed for cultural reasons; the home curricula in this study differed for similar reasons, from home to home. Two apparently similar homes (young single parents, both competent, with jobs outside the home, one older child, living in local authority housing) could create different curricula because of their beliefs and feelings. Whereas Beverley (C7) regarded nightly reading with her child as a pleasure and not a burden, Hayley (C9) regarded that routine as an unacceptable pressure on her and the child.

There were other contrasting pairs; Joan (C11) who thoroughly enjoyed learning about the reading process while she helped her grandchild and Miranda (C8) who helped reluctantly and thought she should not have to take the responsibility. Again, the curricula were dependent on beliefs and perceptions of the parent's roles. Judith (C3) and Lucy (C4) had similar social backgrounds, but the planning and delivery of the literacy curricula was influenced by their confidence in their own abilities as well as the enthusiasm of their children. Julia (C2) and Alan and Celia (C1) delivered very similar curricula to their nursery class children, although Julia rejected the school's suggestions whereas the Alan and Celia incorporated them.

Other parents delivered curricula different to what teachers imagined, due to their beliefs which created a "micro-culture" in the home. Carol (C6) and especially Betty (C10) were influenced by the culture of their own upbringing outside of Britain, and had high standards for their children. Jack's and Laura's (C5) curriculum did not match the school's stereotypical ideas; little reading went on in this home and the more active pursuits were valued by the mother.

A "micro-culture" apparently existed within homes and influenced both home curricula and parental involvement programmes. It seemed to be dependent on different parent's beliefs about and values placed on literacy and parents' perceptions of their own role in helping with reading; teachers might find it helpful if they are aware of this and take it into account.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

All teachers thought that the home was an essential resource in complementing their teaching, though not all went to the same lengths to involve the home. Schools involved parents directly in helping with reading mainly using the PACT system described by Bloom (1987). Writing was never instigated by the school. PACT is very flexible and the system and comments books were used in different ways by individuals; however, the main purpose of the system was to send books home from school to be used for either parent or child to read aloud as appropriate. It was in this way that HCR (in order to help children identify words accurately) was introduced with the study children.

HCR supplemented the existing home curriculum, and in some cases appeared to dominate literacy learning at home; school became a major influence in literacy at home. Contrary to the fears of teachers, parents did not appear to pressure children to read either pre-school or when involved by the school; most reading aloud was done with the agreement of the children; some needed more persuading than others to

continue, but there was no mention at home that sanctions were applied.

Whether children would have read aloud to parents from books without the school intervention cannot be known, although it is likely that they would as their abilities to read developed; Clark's (1978) early fluent readers asked to be heard pre-school before there was the opportunity for school to intervene and some children in the present study had recited books to their parents pre-school. This question could be further investigated by a study of children whose teachers do not involve them in helping.

Whether school intervention displaces the existing home curriculum, and the relative importance of parental involvement to home and school literacy, and the nature of the home curriculum for school children whose teachers do not involve their parents in school directed schemes, are subjects that merit further study.

Helping reading development - Hearing children read (HCR)

Campbell (1988) stated that HCR was a very common practice in schools. Although few parents hear reading before the school involves them in helping, Hannon (1986) said HCR was the most common way of involving parents in helping reading. It was central to the present study to examine the practice and the perceived benefits to reading development of HCR. Teachers and parents in the present study were asked how children reading aloud helped their reading and participants mentioned all of Campbell's points (1-5) as follows:

- 1) For children to learn and practice and for teachers to diagnose problems
- 2) To foster interest and enjoyment in reading by sharing and being involved in a reading activity
- 3) To foster fluency, expression and comprehension
- 4) To check progress and accuracy
- 5) To instruct by e.g. encouraging use of context clues and to teach phonics

and added

- 6) For children to memorise, learn and reinforce words
- 7) To see the usefulness of environmental print
- 8) For the adult to give positive reinforcement, praise for useful strategies
- 9) To practice any available strategies whatever the stage of development
- 10) To gradually increase reading vocabulary, especially if using graded reader
- 11) For interest and pleasure; to motivate; to gain confidence and a sense of progress
- 12) To demonstrate skills and take a pride in reading performance
- 13) To provide an opportunity to ask questions about words, sounds and the structure of language
- 14) To understand the purpose and function of books
- 15) To improve by articulating; can only read aloud at early stage - silent reading unavailable

Not all of these processes were observed in the small sample of reading sessions. Apart from confirming what is already in the literature, this variety of points reflects a sophisticated view of reading which, while it might have been expected of teachers, might not have been expected of parents.

Miscues children make when reading aloud

Campbell (1988) categorised seven types of miscues (see Chapter 1). Substitutions, repetitions, hesitations and self-corrections were noted amongst readers in the present study but insertions and omissions were not noted. This is not surprising as Campbell suggests these miscues are made when the child is actively involved with the text and processing it fast; the study children had not reached that level of fluency. Neither were miscues in sounding out common; again, children had only a basic grasp of phonics, with teachers sounding for them or giving initial sounds.

Responses to children's miscues

Campbell categorises teacher moves to children's miscues (see

Chapter 1) as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1) Non-response | 4) Provides |
| 2) Word cue | 5) Phonic analysis |
| 3) Negative response | 6) Comprehension |

Teachers and parents responded in all of these ways on some occasion. Help was also given by splitting a compound word into its component parts; participants also prompted by reminding the child that s/he knew the word or by pointing back to the word previously read correctly. (These are categories included in Hannon et al (1986), but as previously explained, there was not enough data to use this category system fully).

Teachers and parents (for whom observations were available) were similar in their responses to HCR, as Hannon et al (1986) found. Responses were not arbitrary - participants were able to explain why they responded as they did, and their decisions were usually based on their knowledge of the child's current stage of literacy development. For three teachers and eight parents, a decision how to help children in different ways depended on the type of word (e.g. easy to sound, irregular, very common, read on a previous occasion, difficult to sound, long and unlikely to have been met before). Children also commented on the adults moves and in some cases were able to say whether they found them helpful (see descriptions of triads for details).

Reading to children - to help reading development

It has already been noted from the research literature that parents commonly read to their pre-school children, that this continues after children start school and that teachers recommend reading stories as a way of helping children learn to read. In the present study children being able to read did not affect parents reading them stories. Teale (1984) said the practice was useful in several ways and participants were asked how reading aloud to children helped children's reading progress. They confirmed Teale's points as follows:

- a) Promotes understanding of the functions and uses of written language
- b) Promotes concepts of print, books, reading and the structure of written language
- c) Promotes positive attitudes to reading
- d) Helps understanding of reading strategies including ways of gaining meaning from text.

and added

- e) Links spoken and written word, if parent or child points to word
- f) Provides a correct model of reading
- g) Satisfies the child's demands, and gives a treat or pleasure
- h) Promotes an interest in books and motivates child to read for self
- i) Improves listening skills and concentration
- j) Links the story and written word if the child tackles the book later
- k) Encourages questions about words, sounds and letters

Apart from e), none of these benefits were thought by participants to have a direct effect on reading (two said they definitely did not); Francis (1975) found that the better readers were those children who read aloud regularly rather than those to whom stories were read. Teachers and parents generally acknowledged that children needed to learn reading skills - although they did not all agree when or how.

COMPARING ALL TEACHERS AND PARENTS

Acquiring literacy

Parents and teachers were asked about how they thought children learned to read, how children were helped by reading aloud and being read to, how they helped with difficult words and the role of home and school in teaching reading. In answering these questions they indicated what they believed about the process of learning to read, describing the skills and the conditions they consider necessary for learning. All eleven parents and five teachers thought that children used a variety of word identification skills at an early stage of

development. Remembering and recognising common or irregular words was considered important by all and one teacher and one parent mentioned recognising spelling patterns. Using phonics, (that is either initial or multiple sounds to build words) was also considered important by all participants, although two parents and one teacher thought that at age five phonics were not yet appropriate. Guessing and using the picture or the context were recognised as ways in which children are helped to identify words by all adults. However, three parents thought these strategies unhelpful for identifying words in isolation in the future and preferred children to rely more on sounding.

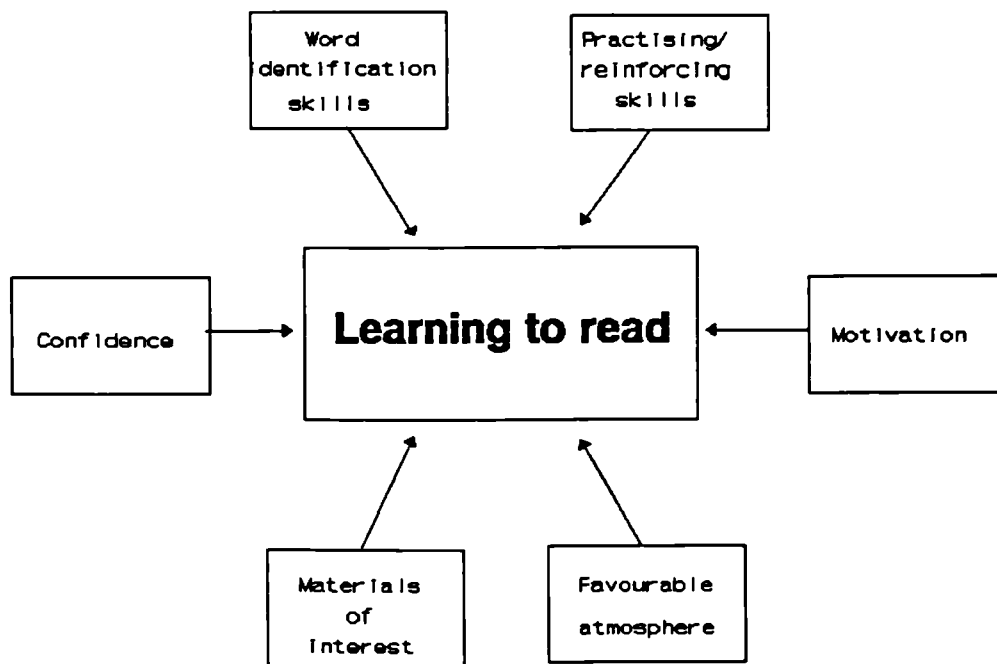
This implies that parents and teachers think that children take a "multi-approach" in early word identification rather than relying on a hierarchy of skills (e.g. from recognition of simple words to building up words using phonics) and is consistent with earlier findings e.g. Francis (1982), Hannon et al (1986) and Southgate et al (1981).

Regarding "conditions" important for reading, ten parents and four teachers mentioned interest and motivation, five parents and four teachers mentioned confidence, five parents and two teachers mentioned a relaxed or conducive atmosphere and seven parents and one teacher mentioned the importance of an adult model seen enjoying reading. Six parents and four teachers thought children enjoying their own reading was important and six parents and two teachers were particularly concerned to allow children to work at a pace comfortable to them. Five parents and three teachers mentioned advantages of a structured reading scheme, although enjoyment of the books read aloud was also thought to be important. Finally, only two teachers mentioned the importance of praising a child's efforts in reading. Most parents and teachers praised children at least a little but only three teachers (Kitty C5/6, Maggie C7/8 and Heather C1/2) and one parent (Jack C5) praised liberally (that is, more than the odd "good" or "well done"). Six parents (no teachers) would take the child's mood into account and supply the word rather than ask the child to

struggle to remember or sound it if the child was tired or distracted. Two parents and two teachers of the youngest children did not think it appropriate to expect children to identify individual words yet unless the child did it of his or her own accord. Eight parents and five teachers of the nine children who could identify some words thought that practice and reinforcement important to reading progress. These "conditions" are regarded as important in learning to read in the literature, particularly in the home curricula described by Schieffelin and Cochrane-Smith (1984) and Clark (1978).

It appears, then, that the parents in this study have similarly sophisticated ideas as teachers about the process of learning to read. A diagram illustrating contributing factors in learning to read is shown below.

FIGURE 4 - CONTRIBUTING FACTORS IN LEARNING TO READ



COMPARING CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES AT HOME AND SCHOOL

Home and school can be compared by examining three main features of the curricula namely learning basic skills for

reading, choice of text and motivation and initiative, in relation to the child transferring from home to school setting and vice versa.

Regarding basic skills, there appeared to be differences at different ages. At age four the emphasis was on text meaning at both home and school; no basic skills were taught in the nursery but Andrew (C1) was having different experiences at home and school as he was taught basic skills at home in anticipation of what the parents expect from the next year in reception and may have helped him to make the transition. It contrasts with Helen who experienced much the same at home and school.

In reception and year one, there was generally little attention given to text meaning at either home or school; the emphasis changed to accuracy. There were contrasts between home and school however; at school, Maggie (C7/8) concentrated on meaning (this reception class was similar to the nursery) although at home Lee (C7) was expected to read accurately. At school Melissa (C9/10/11) emphasised accuracy whereas Matthew (C9) read more for meaning at home. There were clearly differences between some teachers and between some home/school situations especially if the school took a "skills learning" approach and home took an "emergent literacy" approach. Whether these approaches are widespread could be investigated further by detailed observations over longer periods of time.

This study suggests discontinuous experiences as children move through school and possibly through home. Although parents did continue with activities started pre-school (story telling and reading, writing and literacy games) they also took on HCR directed by the school. Four children in reception, (C3/4/5/6), had experienced the same nursery as (C1/2) and in the transfer to reception the emphasis in reading would have changed dramatically at both home and school; not all children e.g. Emma (C3) seemed happy with this and may have found the transition difficult.

"Choice of text" refers to choice of a particular book for a reading session or choice between book or environmental print. There were differences between school and home, and over time in both places. For shared reading in the nursery (C1/2) and Maggie's reception class (C7/8) and for those children at home, children were free to choose books; in most other cases teachers chose books for reading aloud at home and school, although children were free to choose what they read to themselves at school and sometimes substituted a school book at home when reading to parents. Over time, at both home and school, most children would have to make a transition from choosing freely to mainly having their reading material chosen for them.

Environmental print seemed to have a different value at home compared to school at all ages; while teachers often valued its use, none of them said it was more important than reading from books. This is very possibly because there is not a great deal of environmental print within the confines of school compared to what children meet during family life. However, several parents said that, at times, both they and their children got greater satisfaction from reading environmental print than from reading books because the child saw it as meaningful and were able to use it to make the link between the remoteness of what they learned at school and the real world. Different situations may involve transfer between different materials; this may affect the child's motivation to read. The use of environmental print and books in different settings would merit further study.

Motivation and taking the initiative to read seemed different at home and school for the fives and sixes, although not for the nursery children who chose freely when and how much to read. In literacy learning in general and hearing children read aloud in particular, parents seemed to take a much more child-centred approach, being more aware of children's individual differences in temperament, mood and inclinations in reading and seemed to consider these factors more readily than teachers. Parents reported that children might

substitute a home book for a school book, negotiate how much they would read, or not read at all if they were too tired or preoccupied. Teachers did not mention that they gave children this flexibility, although one parent mentioned that her child did not always have to read at school if he did not want to. This aspect of transferring seemed not to upset children. Perhaps they expected to read without question when asked at school, although their opinion on this was not specifically sought.

The quality and amount of time for reading that children had with parents as opposed to teachers appeared superior. In most cases, it was reported that children would read aloud more at home than at school; most parents aimed for ten minutes three times a week (which was the maximum for teachers to aim for) and some parents reported that children read most days. Parents reported that undivided attention was a distinct advantage of reading at home and they were observed to be interrupted very little during recorded sessions. This was not the case at school, where several recordings were full of interruptions (said by teachers to be the normal case). Again, this did not seem to worry children very much - they carried on patiently, including the child who seemed bewildered at times by a boisterous class of thirty.

When parents read stories, there was the advantage that children could choose stories, and the reading could be directed at them personally; however, school offered the different experience of enjoying and sharing a story with a group. It was noticeable that most children liked to be read stories rather than to read aloud themselves at home and school and this perhaps was not surprising considering that most of the children as yet could only read a very limited range of material and story satisfaction might be difficult to gain from their reading aloud efforts.

Despite their differences home and school were making a joint contribution to literacy. Both offered some virtually

exclusive literacy experiences and approaches, for instance phonetic rules, sentence and word building at school and the opportunity to use highly relevant environmental print at home. The home complimented school by engaging in a variety of literacy activities, reinforcing what is taught at school by hearing children read and supplementing what is directed by the teacher, by extending reading with extra books and applying skills to real-life situations. No example can be given of school extending or enriching a particular literacy experience from home, although Helen's mother (C2) commented that the nursery might usefully include books read at home in its reading record.

TRANSFERRING BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

One of the main research questions is how children move between home and school experiences. The children experienced different curricula at home and school, however neither they nor their parents or teachers reported any particular difficulties changing from one to another. In general children did not express any particular preference for who read to them or who heard them read. But several did say they liked to be told words rather than to sound them. Some parents mentioned that their children did or would tell them if the parent instructed them differently from the teacher. Children differed in their preferences as to how they were helped and who they liked to help them, although preferences were never stated strongly.

Children apparently enjoyed and benefitted from the joint literacy experiences - some children more than others. Much depended on how much "in tune" home and school are; Lee (C7) and Holly (C11) were in harmonious situations; their parents supplemented the school's work and extended it with their own ideas. In other cases, Mike (C6) and Helen (C2), the child seemed to move from one different situation to another and accepted the differences without apparent problems, although Matthew (C9) appeared to benefit more from reading with his mother compared to reading to his teacher. In the odd case (Emma C3) there is disharmony not in literacy as such, but in

the adults perceptions of the problems and the communication process.

The question arises whether the home literacy experience is transferred beneficially for later literacy learning at school. Many study children had a rich and varied home curriculum which may have prepared them for later literacy. The literature indicates that curricula involving story reading, early writing and knowledge of sounds and higher level explanations of text would have an indirect (if not a direct effect) on literacy learning e.g. Tizard et al (1988) and Bryant and Bradley, (1985). Therefore, home curricula, as described in this study, as well as having intrinsic value, might benefit the child as a preparation and support for school literacy.

Chapter 7 EVALUATION OF THE STUDY

ADEQUACY OF THE METHODOLOGY

The methodology was useful, although there were limitations. The categories suggested by Duffy and Anderson (1982) were useful in planning the questions; inferring beliefs about literacy by asking questions about literacy practices as well as more direct questions about why practices helped literacy was a successful method to some extent, but data might also have been obtained by asking direct questions like what do you do to teach reading, what are the most successful ways? Parents showed an unexpected degree of sophistication in explaining their approaches to literacy.

There were dangers in inferring from participants transcripts and interpreting them too freely. However, every description was validated either by asking participants to comment or by asking independent observers to listen to tapes and comment on discrepancies in descriptions. For five out of sixteen cases, comments of a minor nature were received and on reconsidering transcripts, all comments were incorporated. The writer was, therefore, satisfied that descriptions were valid, a true reflection of participants' statements.

The sample was small and it was not the intention to generalise; the sample was also limited in that it included one type of parent (generally co-operative and ambitious for their children). It was a definite shortcoming of the study that less advantaged parents were not included - this is a group which could be studied further using this study's methodology.

The observations were useful - using the tapes of HCR as a vehicle for other questioning was reasonable, but the questions concerning children's opinions about transferring from home to school yielded only a little data; it proved surprisingly difficult to elicit information from children and better techniques would be useful. More detailed observation at home and school over a longer period of time with opportunities to observe and question difficulties in

transferring might prove more successful.

The literacy activities checklist proved useful for general background data and as an introduction to the detailed interview; participants were able to prepare themselves for the interview. (Some parents asked for copies as it gave them ideas to extend activities). The checklist also proved useful as a means of cross-checking or validating the interview data. However, it proved rather cumbersome to analyze and added little of relevance to the interview data. The checklist could be used to collect extensive background data for further studies with a larger sample.

Descriptions of the home curriculum were based largely on parent's recall of pre-school days, and this was not always easy for parents. However, there is no reason to suppose that what they said was inaccurate, as descriptions from parents of older children were similar to those of the two children fairly new to the nursery class and to other descriptions in the literature e.g. Hannon and James (1990); Schieffelin and Cochrane-Smith (1984) and Clark (1978).

THE STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY - ADDING TO EXISTING LITERATURE

The data collection was systematic for each subject, so comparisons were valid. The sample studied adds further to existing knowledge of parents' competence as helpers and their similarity to teachers (e.g. Hannon et al, 1986). Useful tools and curricula frameworks have been developed to compare curricula in a meaningful way, allowing coherent descriptions of parental and teacher provision for individual children. This is an advance on existing literature e.g. Tizard et al (1988); Schieffelin and Cochrane-Smith (1984) and Clark (1978) which is concerned with only one situation and does not present a whole picture of children's literacy experiences. The tools could be used to study other "cultures" such as different types of homes or schools at different ages and especially the effect on children of transferring between schools.

The study provides data (rather than speculation) on influences on literacy curricula planning and delivery; this is a step beyond several descriptions of curricula such as Hannon and James (1990); Schieffelin and Cochrane-Smith (1984); Clark (1978) and Tizard et al (1988). The study provides a framework that does not exist in comparative descriptions of home and school literacy provision e.g. Hannon and James (1990) and Francis (1982).

The study suggests children are versatile in changing from one system to the other without any particular problems; thus the fears of confusion through parents helping expressed by teachers in Cuckle and Hannon (1985) and Hannon and James (1990), are not supported. Further, parents are not likely to apply pressure, reinforcing the findings of Hannon and James (1990) Schieffelin and Cochrane-Smith (1984) and Clark (1978)). Teachers should know this if they are to have confidence in involving parents.

FURTHER ISSUES - IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

The purpose of the study was to raise further questions for research as much as to resolve questions. The study raises issues of parents' competence, and relationships and communications between home and school that have implications for both research and practice.

Parents' perceptions of competence

Although parents were competent helpers there was a distinct lack of awareness of their abilities on the part of parents. Observations showed that all adults helped children in the variety of ways they described in their interviews (although some did more than they described) and most adults were skilled in hearing reading and helping.

Ten parents considered that the teachers had superior professional expertise; all teachers thought they had the advantage over parents of expertise and/or experience of many children, although three thought that parents could become expert if they had the time and opportunity to learn. Eight

parents expressed doubts about their own competence either saying that they felt they were inexperienced, were unsure as to whether their approach was helpful, were wary about confusing the child by teaching differently to the school and would like more information from the school on teaching methods particularly helping with difficult words. Five of these mentioned that they had reservations about asking for help, either because they felt intrusive, felt the teacher would not have the time or somehow did not get round to it. Of the three others who expressed doubts about their approaches, two felt they had a satisfactory system of communication either personally or through the PACT notebook to resolve any difficulties and the other one gave a very strong impression that it was the job of the school to take the initiative in communicating with parents. Only three parents appeared to be very confident about how they helped, and they had a combination of relevant professional experience (C2), experience of teaching material aimed at parents (C7) or a successful older child whom she had helped (C4). For teachers to capitalise on parents' help, it seems they need to give feedback and reassurance to parents concerning the help they are giving children, and further research could address the best ways to do this.

Relationship between home and school

The parents generally had confidence in the teacher's methods (as they understood them) although they did not all like the books that were used. Parents did want to help with reading, and had very positive reasons for doing so. Their views about reading and themselves as helpers were sufficiently well formed to suggest that they were committed to helping their children with literacy whatever the school may expect; a number indicated that they probably would independently listen to children reading as they bought or borrowed books for that purpose.

The main reasons given for helping were a desire to help the child make progress and to compensate for lack of individual attention in large classes. But some parents also wanted to

help because they saw reading as a part of satisfying curiosity, helping learning and relating school work to "real life" which they considered part of family life. Others helped because they saw reading as a pleasant activity and a way of focusing attention on the child, because the child asked for help, and because they enjoyed the reading themselves and enjoyed learning about the process of becoming literate. This is consistent with the "emergent" view of literacy described by parents in other studies e.g. Clark (1978) and Schieffelin and Cochrane-Smith (1984). No parents said that they helped only because the school expected it, but two doubted whether they would help if the school had not expected it and sent books.

Given that such parents are competent and there is a good relationship between home and school, communications might affect parents' helping.

EFFECTIVENESS OF SYSTEMS OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is a two-way process and the parents and teachers had their own views about what communication was taking place. The impression the parents gave was of a situation where their help was requested by the school but necessary information or reassurance was not forthcoming from teachers. All teachers thought that most parents could help children very successfully with reading; they thought that most of the parents in the study were helpful, several particularly so, all believed that most of the study parents understood their aims and methods and all believed that they gave appropriate information or invitations to parents to seek information. The teachers had various systems of giving information on helping either at class meetings, through individual parent meetings, via the PACT notebooks or printed materials that they sent home; this was evident in the materials shown to the researcher by the teacher.

Parents, however, were dissatisfied saying that the information was too much at once, was too general or that meetings were either too early or too late in the term to be

helpful. Some did not retain the information either physically or mentally. The obvious way for parents to get guidance would be for them to seek specific advice as it suited their needs; all teachers said they were happy to answer specific questions though four of them were wary of pressuring parents by asking them specifically to help. In general, if parents want to help, this research suggests that they have to be prepared to ask for the guidance they need. One way teachers could give guidance and help parents to gain confidence in hearing reading would be by observing either live, or by video, examples of models hearing reading and helping with difficult words; parents could be given the opportunity to ask questions about the reasoning behind the behaviour and about their own practices. Comment books could be used to ask specific questions as well as to make general comments and it would have to be clear to parents that comment books should be used this way; parents would have to know that their questions and comments were being read, taken seriously and being answered. It may be that parents gain the wrong impression of what is being asked of them and parents need to be told they are not substitute teachers - parental involvement is intended to supplement resources, not replace the teacher's role.

Elliott (1992) remarked on the problems of communication; she found that although parents were given explicit instructions about how to carry out paired reading (PR), some parents preferred not to use it at all while others thought they were using PR but observation showed that they were not. Further research is needed on effective communication between parents and teachers when parents are involved in helping with reading, especially in the area of information about teaching methods and principles and putting systems into practice.

CONCLUSION

There is evidence that parents and teachers in this study planned curricula in accordance with a system of personal beliefs about literacy considerations of the individual and the society in which they lived and with regard to practical

details; this is in accordance with the proposed model. Parents seemed to encourage literacy to emerge and this may be different from the more structured skills teaching in schools. There is no evidence that the children had difficulty in coping with two curricula, although there were some conflicts between the parents and teachers due to different beliefs about aspects of literacy learning and to problems of communication.

There is no reason to suppose that these parents are not representative of the wide range of those who make relatively good provision in the home. A useful follow-up study would explore a sample where home provision was relatively poor, using the same model, but possibly adapting the data collection procedures where appropriate. The aim would be to explore the quantitative and qualitative differences between literacy at home and school for children who in general make slower progress in their literacy development with a view to making practical recommendations for helping them, and to further developing our theoretical understanding of variation in learning to read.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bagby, S.A. (1981) Educational testing for migrant students - fact sheet. National Institute of Education, Washington, DC. USA

Blatchford, P., Burke, J., Farquar, C., Plewis, I. and Tizard, B. (1989) Teacher expectations in infant school: Association with attainment and progress, curriculum coverage and classroom interaction. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 59, 1, pp19-31.

Blenkin, G.M., and Kelly, A.V. (editors) (1988) Early childhood education - A developmental curriculum. Paul Chapman Publishing Limited, London UK.

Bloom, W. (1987) Partnership with parents in reading. London UK: Hodder & Stoughton.

Blyth, C.A. and Wallace F.M.S. (1988) An investigation into the difficulties of transferring written records from the nursery school to the primary school. *Educational Research*, 30, no 3, pp21-223

Braun, D. and Combes, G. (1987) Parental involvement: what are we preparing teachers to do? *Journal of Community Education*, 6, part 2, pp24-28.

Brice-Heath, S. (1983) Ways with words - Language, life and work in communities and classrooms. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, USA.

Bryant, P. and Bradley, L. (1985) Children's reading problems. Blackwell Ltd, Oxford: UK

Brophy, J.E. (1983) Research on the self-fulfilling prophesy and teacher expectations. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 75, pp631-661.

Brophy, J.E. and Gord, T. (1970) Teachers communication of differential expectations for children's classroom performance: some behavioral data. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 61, 365-374.

Burke, A. and Fontes, P. (1986) Educational beliefs and practices of sixth class teachers in Irish Primary schools. *Irish Journal of Education*. 20, 1-2, pp 51-77.

Butler, D. and Clay, M. (1987) Reading begins at home: preparing children for reading before they go to school. Heinemann, Auckland: NZ

Cairney, T. (1987) Foundations of literacy. *Australian Journal of Reading*, 10, 2, p84-96.

Calderhead, J., (ed) (1987), Exploring teacher's thinking. Cassell Educational Limited, London, UK.

- Campbell, R. (1986) Oral reading and teaching instruction. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of London.
- Campbell, R. (1988) Hearing children read Routledge, London UK
- Clark, C.M. (1986) 'Ten years of conceptual development in research on teacher thinking' in Ben-Peretz, M., Bromme, R. and Halkes, R. (1986) Advances of research on teacher thinking. Issued by the International Association on teacher thinking. Berwyn:Swets
- Clark, M. (1978) Young fluent readers: What can they teach us? Heinemann, London: UK
- Clark, M. (1984) Literacy at home and school: Insights from a study of young readers. In Goelman, H., Oberg, A. and Smith, F. Awakening to literacy. Heinemann, New York, USA.
- Clark, M.M. (Ed) (1985) New directions in the study of reading. The Falmer Press, Lewes, UK.
- Clay, M. (1972) Reading - the patterning of complex behaviour. Heinemann Educational Books, Auckland, New Zealand.
- Clay, M (1979) The early detection of reading difficulties. A diagnostic survey with recovery procedures Heinemann, Auckland New Zealand
- Clay, M (1979) Reading begins at home: preparing children for reading before they go to school Heinemann, Auckland New Zealand
- Clay, M. (1982) Observing young readers - Selected papers Heinemann Educational Books, New Hampshire, USA.
- Clay, M (1991) Becoming literate Heinemann, Auckland New Zealand
- Cleave, S., Jowett, S. and Blake, M. (1982) And so to school - a study of continuity from pre-school to infant school. NFER-Nelson
- Cohen, L. and Manion, L. (1985) Research methods in education. Croom Helm, 1985.
- Crowder, R.G., (1982) The Psychology of Reading - an introduction. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK
- Cuckle, P. (1981) A survey of parental involvement in reading development of seven year old children. Unpublished MSc Special Study, Division of Education, University of Sheffield.
- Cuckle, P. and Hannon, P.W. (1985) How far do schools involve parents in the teaching of reading? Reading, 19, no 3,

pp155-160.

Cyster, R., Clift, P.S., and Battle, S. (1981) Parental involvement in primary schools. Slough: NFER.

Domone, P. (1990) Letter to The Guardian, March 1.

Duffy, G. and Anderson, L. (1982) Conceptions of reading project - final report. The Institute for Research on Teaching, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

Elliott, J. (1991) The learning opportunities afforded to children by parental involvement in reading Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leeds

Farquar, C., Blatchford, P., Burke, J., Plewis, I. and Tizard, B. (1987) Curriculum diversity in London infant schools. British Journal of Educational Psychology, 57, pp151-165.

Francis, H. (1970) Symposium: Reading abilities and disabilities - Children's strategies in learning to read. British Journal of Educational Psychology, 47, pp117-125

Francis, H. (1975) Language in childhood. Paul Elek, London:UK

Francis, H. (1982) Learning to read: literate behaviour and orthographic knowledge. Allen and Unwin, London.

Francis, H. (1984) Children's knowledge of orthography in learning to read. British Journal of Educational Psychology, 54, pp8-23

Francis, H. (1985) Problems and strategies in learning to read. In Entwistle, N.J. (Ed) New directions in Educational Psychology. Falmer Press, London:UK.

Francis, H. (1987a) Hearing beginning readers read: problems of relating practice to theory in interpretation and evaluation. British Educational Research Journal, 13, No 3, pp215-225

Francis, H. (1987b) Cognitive implications of learning to read. Interchange, 18, Nos 1/2, pp97-108

Fyfe, R. and Mitchall, E. (1985) Reading strategies and their assessment. NFER-Nelson, Windsor, UK.

Galton, M., Simon, B. and Croll, P. (1980) Inside the primary classroom. Routledge and Kegan Paul. London, UK.

Goelman, H., Oberg, A. and Smith, F. (1984) Awakening to literacy. Heinemann, New York, USA.

- Goetz, J.P. and Le Compte, M. D. (1984) Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research. Academic Press Inc. USA
- Glaser, B.M. and Strauss, A.L. (1967) The discovery of grounded theory - strategies for qualitative research. Aldine Publishing Company, New York, USA.
- Halkes, R. (Ed) Advances of research on teacher thinking. The international study association on teacher thinking, Swets and Zeitlinger B.V.
- Hall, V.C. and Merbel, S.P. (1985) Teacher expectancy effects and educational psychology. In Dusek, J.B. (ed) Teacher experiences. Hillsdale NJ:Erlbaum.
- Hannon, P.W. and Cuckle, P. (1984) Involving parents in the teaching of reading: a study of current school practice. *Educational Research*, 26, no 1, pp 7-13
- Hannon, P., Jackson, A. and Weinberger, J. (1986) Parents' and teachers' strategies in hearing young children read. *Research Papers in Education*, 1, pp 6-25
- Hannon, P. (1987) A study of the effects of parental involvement in the teaching of reading on children's test performance. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 57, pp56-72
- Hannon, P. (1989) How should parental involvement in teaching of reading be evaluated? *British Educational Research Journal*, 15, No1, pp33-40
- Hannon, P. and James, S. (1990) Parents' and teachers' perspectives on pre-school literacy development. *British Educational Research Journal*, 16, no 3, pp 259-272.
- Hannon, P., Weinberger, J. and Nutbrown, C. (1991) A study of work with parents to promote early literacy development. *Research Papers in Education*, 6, (2), pp77-97
- Hatch, J. Amos and Freeman, E.B. (1987) Ohio kindergarten programs: perspectives of teachers, principals and supervisors. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American educational research association (Washington D.C., April 20-24, 1987).
- Hewison, J. and Tizard, J. (1980) Parental involvement and reading attainment. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 50, 209-215.
- Hill, C.J. (1972) Transfer at eleven. NFER, Windsor, UK.
- Hobbs, S. et al (1988) What happens to children going to the big school?

School Organisation, 8, no 1, pp 67-85.

John, D.L. A study of the views of parents and teachers and teachers on parental involvement in four infant schools. Unpublished MA thesis, London University, Institute of Education.

Kress, G. (1989) Linguistic processes in socio-cultural context. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.

Lawton, D. (1978) Introduction in Lawton, D., Gordon, P., Ing, M., Gibby, B., Pring, R. and Moore, T. (1978) Theory and practice of Curriculum studies. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, UK. pp 1-6.

Leichter, Hope Jensen (1984) 'Families as Environments for Literacy.' In Goelman, H., Oberg, A. and Smith, F. (1984) Awakening to literacy. Heinemann, New York, USA.

Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. (1985) Naturalistic Inquiry. Beverley Hills: Sage USA

Luke, A. (1988) Literacy, textbooks and ideology; postwar literacy instruction and the mythology of Dick and Jane. Falmer, Basingstoke, UK.

Marshall, P. (1988) Transfer and continuity in the educational process. Kogan Page, London.

Mackay, D., Thompson, B. and Schaub, P. (1970) Breakthrough to literacy - Teachers, manual. Longman: London UK

McNaughton, S., Glynn, T., and Robinson, V.M. (1981) Parents as remedial reading tutors. Issues for home and school. New Zealand Council for Educational Research. Wellington, New Zealand.

Miller, P., Nemianu, A., De Jong, J. (1986) 'Early reading at home: Its practice and meanings in a working class community.' In Schieffelin, B. and Gilmore, P (Editors) (1986) The acquisition of literacy - Ethnographic perspectives Vol XXI Ablex, New Jersey USA

Moyn, C. and Raban, B. (1975) Question of reading. Ward Lock Educational, UK.

Money, T. (1988) Early Literacy. In Blenkin, G.N. and Kelly, A.V. (eds) Early childhood education - A developmental approach. Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd, London, UK.

Murphy, J. (1974) Teacher expectations and working class underachievement. British Journal of Sociology, 25, 326-44.

Newman, J. (1988) What should we do about the highly mobile student? - a

research brief. Educational Service District 189, Mt. Vernon, Washington. USA

Newson, J. and Newson, E. (1963) Infant care in an urban community. Allen and Unwin, UK.

Pajares, M Frank (1992) Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. Review of Educational Research, 62, 3, pp307-332

Palardy, J. (1969) What teachers believe, what children achieve. Elementary School Journal. 69, 370-374.

Patton, M.Q. (1980) Qualitative Evaluation methods. Sage Publications, Beverley Hills, USA

Perera, K. (1984) Children's writing and reading - analyzing classroom language. Blackwell, Oxford, UK.

Plowden Report (1967) Children and their primary schools (2 Vols) Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education in England, HMSO, London, UK.

Raven, J. (1989) Early childhood Education. British Journal of Educational Psychology, Monograph Series 4, (Ed. Desforages, C.) Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh, UK.

Reid, J. (1972) Children's comprehension of syntactic features found in some extension readers. Occasional paper of the University of Edinburgh centre for research in the educational sciences.

Richards, C. (Ed) (1982) New directions in primary education Falmer, UK

Samson, A. and Reason, R. (1988) What is successful reintegration? British Journal of Special Education. 15, no 1, pp 19-23.

Schieffelin, B. and Cochran-Smith, M. (1984) 'Learning to Read Culturally: Literacy Before Schooling.' In Goelman, H., Oberg, A. and Smith, F. (1984) Awakening to literacy. Heinemann, New York, USA.

Scribner, S. and Cole, M. (1981) The psychology of literacy. Harvard University Press, USA

Sewell, C. (1982) The impact of pupil mobility on assessment of achievement and its implications for program planning. National Institute of Education, Washington, DC. USA

Simon, B. and Willcocks, J. (eds) (1981) Research and practice in the primary classroom. Routledge and Kegan Paul. London, UK.

Smith, F. (1988) Understanding reading. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey, USA.

Smith, L.A., (1983). Changing school; the problems of transition. Report of the proceedings of the March Education Conference (1983 - Goldsmith's College).

Southgate, V., Arnold, H. and Johnson, S. (1981) Extending beginning reading Heinemann, London:UK

Stewart-Dore, N. (Ed), (1986), Writing and reading to learn. Primary English Teaching Association, Rozelle (Australia).

Stillman, A. and Maychell, K. (1982) Transfer procedures at nine and thirteen. The interim report of the school liaison and transfers project. NFER, Windsor, UK.

Stone, E. (1987) Teaching practice supervision; bridge between theory and practice, *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 10, pp 67-79.

Teale, William. H. (1984) 'Reading to Young Children: Its Significance for Literacy Development.' In Goelman, H., Oberg, A. and Smith, F. (1984) Awakening to literacy. Heinemann, New York, USA.

Tizard, B., Blatchford, P., Burke, J., Farquhar, C., and Plewis, I. (1988) Young children at school in the inner city Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Ltd, East Sussex UK

Topping, K. and Wolfenden, S. (Eds) (1985) Parental involvement in children's reading. Croom Helm, New York, USA.

Topping, K. (1986) Parents as educators - training parents to help their children. Croom Helm Ltd, London, UK

Wagner, D.A. (Ed) (1987) The future of literacy in a changing world. Pergamon Press, Oxford UK

Whitaker, K. and Monte, M. (1988) Does learning theory influence teaching practices? *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 11, 2-3, pp143-147.

White, I. (1989) Three learn to swim in mainstream: Rothesay Academy's induction programme for pupils with special needs. *Times Scottish Education Supplement*. No. 1180, June 1989.

Wilby, P. (1981) The Belfield Experiment, Sunday Times Weekly Review. March 29th.

Zinsser, C. (1986) 'For the bible tells me so: Teaching children in a fundamentalist church.' In Schieffelin, B. and Gilmore, P (Editors) The acquisition of literacy - Ethnographic perspectives Vol XXI Ablex, USA

APPENDIX 1 SYNOPSIS OF DUFFY AND ANDERSON (1982)Resume of report on teachers' conceptions of readingA study of teachers' thinking with regard to literacyA summary of categories used (may be of use)

Duffy and Anderson (1982) carried out a piece of research over a number of years concerning teachers' conceptions of reading (alternatively referred to as belief systems or implicit theories) and their relationship to practices in teaching reading.

They carried out the study in three main stages:

1) They developed a set of propositions about teachers conceptions of reading with a view to categorising them into one of five groups according to ideas about and general approach to reading as follows:

Content orientated

Basal text
Linear skills

Pupil orientated

Interest
Natural language
Integrated whole

To be included in any category, teachers had to strongly agree with five statements (on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree) which indicated a particular category. The scale was tested and altered several times, being subject to factor analysis and reliability analyses before reaching its final form.

As well as being related to one of the five categories above, each item on the scale was also related to one of eight dimensions as follows:

Pupil progress	material selection
pupil grouping	time availability
word recognition cues	comprehension emphasis
instructional role	
time availability in relation to pupil ability	

Hence, in the questionnaire, each of the categories of conception had statements related to one of eight dimensions.

2) Having completed the five-point scale, teachers were interviewed in depth about their conceptions; the teachers' completed questionnaires were used as a basis for probes in the interview and the questions covered the area of

- a) Present programme, philosophy, beliefs about readers and grouping
- b) Genesis and development of conceptions and principles describing conceptions
- c) Instructional decisions, either permanent, context specific or on-the-spot-decisions

3) The third interview (which was very lengthy) involved questions related to the eight dimensions asking teachers to answer for different contexts as follows:

- a) slowest readers
- b) same grade/deferent socio-economic group
- c) Top readers
- d) same children/higher grade
- e) whole of present class

The interviews were coded according to a coding schedule which is detailed in the appendices.

Conclusions

The conclusions to the study are summarised briefly:

- 1) The interaction between instruction and concept is complex.
- 2) Teachers modify instructional decision making according to multidimensional concepts - most teachers have more than one conception of reading.
- 3) Teachers' decisions are apparently not based exclusively on implicit theories of reading. The conception of reading is mediated by contextual factors in the classroom, that is "non-reading" factors such as social/emotional factors and ability. This drives the teacher to select certain instructional alternatives.
- 4) Teachers' beliefs and decision making are "fluid". What reading is and how it is presented is filtered through the teacher's ideas about the classroom as a social unit. The beliefs are applied to a specific teaching context; as a similar example, a teacher in my pilot study said that her most useful activity was one that varied from year to year and group to group, according to the variations of a particular class of children.
- 5) The authors regard the study as an important contribution in that it demonstrates reading improvement in the classroom as linear - work on reading must reflect this and account for it.

RELATING THE WORK TO PRESENT STUDY

This is a very important piece of work in relation to the study:

- 1) The idea that beliefs and decision making are "fluid" and affected by social/emotional factors and ability ("non-reading" factors) fits in with the idea that curriculum delivery is affected by an interaction of philosophical, psychological, social and practical factors.
- 2) There are a number of methodological factors that are important:
 - a) The propositions leading to categorisation of teachers conceptions about reading may be useful in constructing an interview schedule and in analyzing data.
 - b) The eight dimensions of decision making in reading relate to the ideas behind the questions for an interview schedule and will help to refine the questions and later analyze data from them.
 - c) The technique of completing a questionnaire and partly basing an interview on it is a useful one.
 - d) The coding schedule for the interviews may be very useful in analyzing data.
 - e) The form of some of the questions used as probes are very useful, concerning for example, the origins of ideas and how ideas have changed over time, asking about classroom observations and beliefs about readers.
 - f) The dimensions relating to comprehension and word identification are useful in framing questions.
- 3) The methodology employed, descriptions of data and its analysis and underlying ideas about teachers' conceptions are the most useful aspects of the report. However, the study is a more detailed study of teachers' conceptions than would be appropriate. Whereas the present study involves parental and home factors Duffy and Anderson do not consider them. Interviews need to ask the same questions of both parents and teachers and obviously most of the questions in the study would not be applicable, even if they were understood. For example, while the five point scale was appropriate for the teachers for sorting out the details of their conceptions, it does not apply to the present study or to its particular subjects. The multiple choice questionnaire as a preliminary to an interview seems a better choice. If presented to the subjects beforehand,

it could act as a focus for thoughts upon which adults could reflect before an interview and as a way of getting basic data without using interview time. Interview time could be use to expand some of the answers. Nevertheless, a number of elements mentioned above could be used as they stand or in an adapted form to enhance the present study.

APPENDIX 2 PRELIMINARY STUDY 1 - LETTER INVITING WRITTEN WORK

Dear Parents and Children

I am researching into children's literacy, one particular interest being how children use writing outside of the school setting for different purposes.

I would, therefore, like to collect examples of home made books or comics, stories, poems, diaries, letters, notes, reminders, lists, crosswords, puzzles, games, recipes, instructions or any other use of the written word (whether hand written, typed or computer-generated) which children would be willing to show me. (Brothers, sisters and friends are also welcome to show examples). Material could have been written at any age between five and eleven.

All contributions would be very gratefully received and would be quickly returned to the owners. It would help if examples could have a name and telephone number attached, with the child's class and the age at which the example was written. Examples could either be given to the class teacher or to me (I am usually outside of Mrs. Lewis' reception class in the morning and most afternoons).

I must emphasise that the purpose of the collection is to demonstrate a variety of different uses of writing and not to make any assessment in any way. For any further information required please ring 348 3819.

Yours sincerely

Pat Moorcroft-Cuckle (PhD Research Student)

APPENDIX 3 PRELIMINARY STUDY 2 INTERVIEW SCHEDULE - NOT DISCUSSEDQUESTIONS ON READING AND WRITING FOR PARENT AND CHILD

First of all I want to ask about reading.

P. Are books sent home from school to be read, either to the child or for the child to read to you?

P. If s/he is reading aloud do you just listen or do you help the child to read? How do you help?

CH. Do you ever read books by yourself in your free time?

CH. Does anyone ever read books to you? Who?
Who chooses the books?

CH. Can you tell me a book that you have enjoyed reading?

CH. Do you borrow from the library? Who chooses them?

CH. Do you have some books of your own? Who chooses them when they are bought?

CH. Do you mainly read stories or do you read poems or information books sometimes?

CH. Do you read other things besides books (eg. comics, labels, games, instructions, directions, street signs)

Now I want to ask about writing.

CH. Do you do writing sent home by the school?

P. Do you help with writing tasks sent home by school?

CH. Do you like to do drawing and writing you choose yourself?

CH. Do you use felt tips, crayons, pencils, computer, typewriter?

CH. What things do you usually write? (Notices, lists, letters, cards, stories, poems, address presents, fill in forms, puzzles, instructions, diaries, magnetic letters)

P. Do you help with any of these?

CH. Can you show me any of your writing?

P. Do you ever set the child a specific writing task, eg. write a letter or a list?

P. Perhaps we haven't talked about all the reading and writing activities that the child does at home; can you think of any others and say anything about them?

P. How much of the reading and writing done at home is sent home from school and how much does the child decide to do for him/herself?

SETTING THE SCENE FOR INTERVIEWING1. EXPLAIN SUBJECT OF INVESTIGATION

How children are using reading and writing skills at home and how these relate to school directed practices at home.

A pilot interview, with a view to developing the final interview. However, with permission I would like to quote; interview will be taped and transcribed.

May want another interview with parent or child after reflection.
 May possibly want to speak to teacher in general terms about literacy practices, but not about child's progress.

Examples of reading and writing practices:

Reading stories and poems	Reading instructions
Having stories and poems read	Reading ingredients
Reading and writing letters	Making books / comics
Making puzzles / crosswords	Writing diaries
Fill in forms	Writing stories

The questions will be very straightforward, not in any way devious. I simply want to find out what happens under normal circumstances in an ordinary home.

2. EXPLAIN THE ROLE OF PARENT AND CHILD IN INTERVIEW

Would like answers from child but parent should feel free to help child with answers to give as much information in as short a time as possible. The aim is to make the interview as short as possible in line with the child's limited concentration. Will ask direct questions of adult too.

Useful to know a little about the parent's background as this can throw light on responses (eg if parent has been a teacher)

APPENDIX 4 PRELIMINARY STUDY 2 - INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENT AND CHILDQUESTIONS ON READING AND WRITING FOR PARENT AND CHILD

First of all I want to ask about reading.

P. Are books sent home from school to be read, either to the child or for the child to read to you?

P. If s/he is reading aloud do you just listen or do you help the child to read? How do you help?

CH. Do you ever read books by yourself in your free time?

CH. Does anyone ever read books to you? Who?
Who chooses the books?

CH. Can you tell me a book that you have enjoyed reading?

CH. Do you borrow from the library? Who chooses them?

CH. Do you have some books of your own? Who chooses them when they are bought?

CH. Do you mainly read stories or do you read poems or information books sometimes?

CH. Do you read other things besides books (eg. comics, labels, games, instructions, directions, street signs)

Now I want to ask about writing.

CH. Do you do writing sent home by the school?

P. Do you help with writing tasks sent home by school?

CH. Do you like to do drawing and writing you choose yourself?

CH. Do you use felt tips, crayons, pencils, computer, typewriter?

CH. What things do you usually write? (Notices, lists, letters, cards, stories, poems, address presents, fill in forms, puzzles, instructions, diaries, magnetic letters)

P. Do you help with any of these?

CH. Can you show me any of your writing?

P. Do you ever set the child a specific writing task, eg. write a letter or a list?

P. Perhaps we haven't talked about all the reading and writing activities that the child does at home; can you think of any others and say anything about them?

P. How much of the reading and writing done at home is sent home from school and how much does the child decide to do for him/herself?

SETTING THE SCENE FOR INTERVIEWING1. EXPLAIN SUBJECT OF INVESTIGATION

How children are using reading and writing skills at home and how these relate to school directed practices at home.

A pilot interview, with a view to developing the final interview. However, with permission I would like to quote; interview will be taped and transcribed.

May want another interview with parent or child after reflection.
 May possibly want to speak to teacher in general terms about literacy practices, but not about child's progress.

Examples of reading and writing practices:

Reading stories and poems	Reading instructions
Having stories and poems read	Reading ingredients
Reading and writing letters	Making books / comics
Making puzzles / crosswords	Writing diaries
Fill in forms	Writing stories

The questions will be very straightforward, not in any way devious. I simply want to find out what happens under normal circumstances in an ordinary home.

2. EXPLAIN THE ROLE OF PARENT AND CHILD IN INTERVIEW

Would like answers from child but parent should feel free to help child with answers to give as much information in as short a time as possible. The aim is to make the interview as short as possible in line with the child's limited concentration. Will ask direct questions of adult too.

Useful to know a little about the parent's background as this can throw light on responses (eg if parent has been a teacher)

APPENDIX 5 PRELIMINARY STUDY 4 - INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

PARENT'S INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Do you ever help your child with reading?

Is it something the school asks you to do or do you decide for yourself?

ABOUT READING ALOUD

Do you hear your child read aloud on a regular basis?

What do you think the school asks you to hear reading?

Can you describe what you do when you hear your child reading?

What do you do if a child doesn't know a word when s/he is reading aloud?

ABOUT MATERIALS AND ORGANISATION

What sort of books does your child bring home to read - story books or part of a reading scheme?

What do you think of these books?

How do you organise a time for the child to read aloud?

How do you handle it if the child seems to be reluctant to read at that time - do you leave it or do you insist that s/he reads?

THE CHILD'S USE OF BOOKS

Does your child choose to read books apart from those sent home by the school?

When would s/he read these books?

Does s/he enjoy reading books on her/his own?

What sort of books does s/he read - stories, poems, information books?

Are they from the library or are they his/her own?

Do you guide the choice at all?

How do you do this?

Do you know how s/he chooses books when allowed to choose freely?

What does the child do with these books?

ABOUT WRITING

Do you help with writing at all?

How do you think the children's writing develops - what are the important steps?

How do think you could encourage him to become an independent speller?

Is there an example of the child's writing?

LITERACY PRACTICES AT HOME

In a typical week, what reading and writing would your child be doing at home - what different activities does s/he do? For example, writing letters or cards, writing puzzles, reading things besides books.

Is there any particular thing that you think is important in learning to

read and write?

ABOUT CHILD IN PARTICULAR

How is the child progressing with reading and writing?

How do you see him/her in relation to other children that you know?

ABOUT LITERACY IN GENERAL

How do you think reading develops - what are the important steps?

Where would you say you got your ideas about how to teach reading and writing from? I mean the underlying ideas rather than the practical ones.

How did you gather these ideas?

Are there any things that you know of that other parents or teachers do regarding reading that you don't do? Like the way they organise the time or the way they actually help.

Why don't you do them?

Do you feel there are any outside pressures put on you that affect the way you help your child with reading and writing - for example family, friends, long term hopes or general social pressures?

ABOUT PARENTS HELPING

How do you think parents can help their children in learning to read and write?

Does the school ask you to help specifically?

What does the teacher ask you to do?

Why do you think they ask this?

Do you do it?

Do you think there is anything else that you could do that might be more useful?

Is there anything in particular that you are asked not to do?

Why?

Do you think you can offer anything that the teacher can't?

What?

APPENDIX 6 PRELIMINARY STUDY 4 - INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERSTEACHER'S INTERVIEW SCHEDULEABOUT READING ALOUD

Does an adult hear children read aloud on a regular basis?

Who is it usually?

Why do you hear reading aloud?

Can you describe what you do (or what your helper does) when you hear a child reading?

What do you do if a child does not know a word when s/he is reading aloud?

ABOUT MATERIALS AND ORGANISATION

How do you select books for a child to read aloud?

What do you think is the place of a published reading scheme in teaching literacy?

How do you organise a time for the child to read aloud?

How do you handle it if the child seems to be reluctant to read at that time - are you able to be flexible or do you expect the child to fit in with the teacher's organisation?

THE CHILD'S USE OF BOOKS

Does child have time in school for choosing books freely apart from those s/he reads to or with an adult?

When does s/he do this?

Does s/he enjoy reading books on her/his own?

What sort of books does s/he read - stories, poetry, information books?

Are they guided in choosing books?

How are they guided?

Do you know how s/he chooses books when allowed to choose freely?

How does the child use the books s/he chooses?

ABOUT WRITING

How do you think the children's writing - what are the important steps?

How do you encourage him to become an independent speller?

CLASSROOM PRACTICES

In a typical week, in what ways would the child be practising literacy skills? What different reading and writing activities does s/he do?

Is there any practice or condition that you think is particularly important in becoming literate?

ABOUT CHILD IN PARTICULAR

How is the child progressing with reading and writing?

How do you see him/her in relation to other children in the class?

ABOUT LITERACY IN GENERAL

How do you think literacy develops - what are the important steps?

To what extent do you think you can gear your reading programme to the individual's stage of development and abilities, given a class of 30+ children?

What ideas influence how you teach reading and writing? I mean underlying ideas rather than practical ideas.

How do you gather these ideas?

Are there any things that some teachers do or perhaps you used to do that you don't do now regarding teaching reading and writing? For example, the way you organise or teach or help with reading and writing.

Why don't you do these things?

Do you think there are any outside pressures put on you that affect the way you teach literacy, for example from the school, the borough, long terms expectations for the child as an adult or social pressures in general?

ABOUT PARENTS HELPING

How do you think parents can help their children in learning to read and write?

What do you ask the child's parents to do?

Why do you ask this?

Do they do it or do you think they could help more?

Is there anything in particular that you ask them not to do?

Why?

As far as literacy is concerned, what do you think you are offering that the parent can't offer?

APPENDIX 9 MAIN STUDY INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERSINTERVIEW FOR TEACHERS

You have filled in the checklist and I have looked at it: now I want to ask some questions that go into more details than the checklist can.

Perhaps some of the answers you give vary according to the particular child (target child) we are studying - we'll talk about these as we go along. So we will be talking both generally and about some children in particular.

READING ALOUD

1) You read aloud to children on a number of different occasions in the course of a week - do you think this helps children with their reading? How?

Does this vary for the target children? 1b

2) Children in your class read aloud as a regular activity. How do you think this helps children to progress? Does this vary for the target children? 3

3) How long do you spend hearing each child read? How often would this be?

4) The way you listen to children reading aloud and the way you help with difficult words, would this vary in hearing different children - why is this? 4

5) What would you do with each target child?

IDEAS ABOUT READING AND WRITING

6) Not everybody agrees about what marks the start of reading. Thinking about the things you marked, how do they fit in with your idea of what reading is? How do you think children learn to read? 17

PARENTS HELPING

7) You say that parents can help - do you have any reservations about this? 22

9) To what extent are the parents instructed on helping with reading by the school?

9a) Would you ask all parents to do the same things or would it differ from child to child? Why is this?

How do you ask the parents of to help?

9b) You say most parents are ... Is this true of the target parents or would you describe them differently? 24

9c) What do you think about the way that ... help with reading?

9d) Would you like to see them do anything different?

10) Can the parent offer anything that the school cannot?

11) What can the school offer that parents can't?

OTHER INFLUENCES

12) In what way do the outside influences affect the way you teach reading? 25

ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN

15) How is the child progressing? How do you see future progress?

16) Is s/he a keen reader - has s/he always been or is it something that has come slowly?

16a) Can you remember when the child first read something aloud - how did you encourage this reading ability?

20) The child may have different experiences at home and at school regarding the way that they are helped with reading and writing. Do you think there are any problems in transferring from one system to the other for the child?

21) Are there any things you would like to change regarding the way you teach reading and writing, for instance more time, more knowledge, more books or anything else?

22) Is there anything you would like to add that we might have missed?

23) Is there anything you would like to ask about?

APPENDIX 10 MAIN STUDY INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTSINTERVIEW FOR PARENTS

You have filled in the checklist and I have looked at it, now I want to ask some questions that go into more details than the checklist can.

Perhaps some of the answers you give vary according the circumstances (or perhaps in comparison to how you help your other children) - we'll talk about these as well as we go along. So we will be talking both generally and about your child in particular.

READING ALOUD

1) You read aloud to your child on a number of different occasions in the course of a week - do you think this helps the child with reading? How? 1b

2) Your child reads aloud as a regular activity - how do you think this helps him/her to progress? 3

3) How long do you spend hearing him/her read? How often would this be?

4) The way you listen to the child reading aloud and the way you would help with difficult words, would this vary at different times - why is this? 4

5) When hearing reading aloud, does it make any difference whether the books are from home or school? Would you use them differently? Do you use other print from around us for reading aloud - does that have any particular value for you?

IDEAS ABOUT READING AND WRITING

6) Not everybody agrees about what marks the start of reading. Thinking about the things you marked, how do they fit in with your idea of what reading is? How do you think children learn to read? 17

PARENTS HELPING

7) You say that parents can help - do you have any reservations about this? 22

8) Are there any things you do that you are not asked to do? Why is that? How do you think it helps?

Why do you think you are asked not to?

9) To what extent are you instructed on helping with reading by the school?

10) Can the parent offer anything that the school cannot?

11) What do you think the school can offer that parents can't?

OTHER INFLUENCES

12) In what way do the outside influences affect whether and how you help with reading? 25

ABOUT THE CHILD

13) Are you generally pleased with the way the school handles reading and the way they ask you to help?

14) What would you like to see different?

15) How is the child progressing? How do you see future progress?

16) Is s/he a keen reader?

17) Thinking back to the pre-school years, has s/he always been interested or is it something that has come slowly?

18) If s/he was interested before s/he started school, what kind of things did you read to the child, and what things was s/he interested in - books or other print that is all around us?

19) When did you first notice the child able to read anything out loud - how did you encourage this new ability?

20) The child has certain experiences at home and at school regarding reading and writing (these experiences may be different) - therefore s/he is transferring from one system to another. Do you think there are any problems for the child in transferring? What are they?

21) Are there any things you would like to change regarding the way you help with reading and writing, for instance more time, more knowledge, more guidance, more books available or anything else?

22) Is there anything you would like to add that we might have missed out?

23) Is there anything you would like to ask about?

APPENDIX 11 PARTS OF CHECKLIST USED FOR OBSERVATION SCHEDULEOBSERVATIONS

Observe and note literacy activities that take place in the classroom. Keep detailed field notes of any literacy activities taking place involving the target child with a focus on how s/he tackles unfamiliar words in both reading and spelling, how much s/he reads back own work, whether s/he enjoys reading and writing.

Child reads:

	<u>Individual:Group:Class</u>			
A story or information book	:	:	:	:
A caption	:	:	:	:
A notice	:	:	:	:
A poem, song or rhyme	:	:	:	:
Instructions for a game	:	:	:	:
Worksheet or workbook in use	:	:	:	:
Current written work	:	:	:	:
Newspaper or magazine articles	:	:	:	:
Book designed for class reading	:	:	:	:
Other (please specify)	:	:	:	:

Teacher reads:

	<u>Individual:Group:Class</u>			
A story or information book	:	:	:	:
A caption	:	:	:	:
A notice	:	:	:	:
A poem, song or rhyme	:	:	:	:
Instructions for a game	:	:	:	:
Worksheet or workbook in use	:	:	:	:
Current written work	:	:	:	:
Newspaper or magazine articles	:	:	:	:
Daily story time	:	:	:	:
A book to be read back	:	:	:	:
Other (please specify)	:	:	:	:

GENERAL READING AND WRITING ACTIVITIES

Trace over the top of adult's writing

Copy below adult's writing

Make letter-like shapes and tell you what they say

Attempt to spell inaccurately but phonetically

Dictate a sentence for you to write

Expect to correct spellings under adult guidance

Use home made/published dictionary/list to look for spellings

Ask for spelling to be put in own word book

Ask adult to find correct initial letter page in word book

Child finds correct initial letter page in word book

Letter formation and handwriting practice

Make words with magnetic or plastic letters

Write without aids, with some correct spelling

Ask for spellings to be given verbally

Exercises e.g. filling in missing letters/words

Ordering jumbled letters or captions

Read book aloud to adult

Read book aloud to other child

Have time for reading by self or with friend

Reading involved in games

Have a story read to them most days

Read aloud captions in environment e.g. on wall

Read words during singing or hymn practice

Computer based activity involving reading

Read back own writing to self, friend or adult

Write factual account e.g. news, science

Dictate sentence/story to adult and read it back

Write with a computer

Write a sentence or caption for a picture

Use a sentence maker, copy words

Write imaginative account or story

Read a "home-made" book

Read a large book designed for group or class

Write a letter, note or card

Other (Please specify)

APPENDIX 12 QUESTIONING OF ADULTS AND CHILDREN DURING HEARING CHILDREN
READ AND QUESTIONS ABOUT CHILDREN'S PREFERENCES

CHOOSING A BOOK

Ask child to choose a book to read together

QUESTIONS ABOUT READING ALOUD AND HELPING

Do you like reading a book with a friend?

Do you help each other?

Who do you usually read to at home?

Who do you read to at school?

Who do you prefer to read to - why?

Would you like your mother to help more with reading - what would you like her to do?

Would you like your teacher to help you more - what would you like her to do?

Who do you like to help you best?

Do you like to read books to someone or do you like someone to read books to you best?

TAPE RECORDINGS

Child reading to teacher
" " " parent

Questions to the teacher/parent when HCR

I noticed that you (describe help) with that word - why did you do that?

Do you think it helped him/her?

How do you think it helped?

Questions to the child while child reading to adult

Your teacher/parent helped you with that word, didn't s/he?

What did s/he do? How did that help you?

Did you like him/her to help that way?

What else would you like the adult to do to help?

Does your mummy and your teacher do the same things to help you or do they do different things?

Do you ever get muddled if your mummy and your teacher ask you to do different things when you read to them?

WRITING

Collect samples of writing - ask child:

Can you read it?

Who did you do it for? Is it to stay at school or is it to take home?

How did you think of it? How did you find out the spellings?

APPENDIX 13 SYNOPSIS OF RESEARCH - HANDOUT FOR SCHOOLSOUTLINE OF PHD PROJECTGENERAL AIMS

The aim of the project is to investigate and describe the relationship between school and home experiences and practices in learning to read and write and the implications of this for children aged four to eight years old. A model of the experience of different kinds of provision is expected to form a useful basis for advancing practice and policy relating to children's experiences of transition from one kind of provision to another.

THE QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

What classroom practices to do with reading and writing does the child experience frequently.

How the school asks the parents to help with reading and writing.

What the parents do when they help with school-directed tasks in reading and writing.

To what extent and how parents encourage reading and writing at home in the child's free time, apart from school directed tasks.

How the child perceives the different types of help s/he receives at school and at home.

METHODS TO BE EMPLOYED

The study would be based on data from detailed checklists, interviews and observations and would involve the following:

Checklist and follow-up interview with parent at home to identify and discuss children's reading and writing practices.

Observations of the child in school engaged in reading and writing activities and discussion of these with child.

Checklist, follow-up interview and discussion of classroom observations of reading and writing activities with teacher.

SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The aim of the study is to describe what happens in normal practice, not to test ability of any participants.

At least two observation sessions in the classroom per child will be necessary and interviews would be planned to be as short as possible. It would be helpful if teachers could nominate two children to take part after discussion and after I have had an initial observation period. I would like to carry out the observations and interviews as soon as possible.

The aim is to make participation in the study enjoyable and beneficial to those taking part.

The interviews and observations would be as informal as possible, but it will be necessary to tape-record interviews for transcribing and to make detailed notes on observations.

All information collected will be strictly confidential, permission will be sought from participants to quote and describe detailed observations in the final thesis or any other publications in such a way that participants and schools could not be identified.

APPENDIX 14 LETTER INVITING PARENT AND CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN MAIN STUDY

8 May 1991

Dear Ms

I understand that Mrs *** from *** school has asked you to agree to yourself and child taking part in a research project based at the Institute of Education. I am carrying out a study to investigate how teachers and parents work together to help children in learning to read and write. In recent years there has been a lot of interest in parents helping with reading but very little research done on the ways parents actually help. The conclusions of my research could be used by parents and teachers to make parental help effective in schools starting new schemes.

Taking part in the project would involve three main things;

- 1) Me seeing child in school and observing reading and writing activities
- 2) You completing a checklist concerning the kind of reading and writing activities that child does at home, and a follow-up discussion with you on some of the points in the checklist.
- 3) Her teacher filling in a similar checklist about reading and writing activities in school to be followed up with a discussion of some of the points with her.

I am aiming to keep the checklist and discussion as short as possible, and to carry them out within the next month. Participants in the study have found it enjoyable and felt that they had gained something by discussing their points of view.

The discussions and observations would be as informal as possible, but it would be necessary to tape-record discussions and to make detailed notes on observations.

The study would, of course, be strictly confidential and although parts of discussions and observations will be needed to illustrate different points in writing up, material would be used in such a way that individuals and schools could not be identified.

I will be very grateful if you are able to take part and will ring you shortly to arrange a time to meet. If you would like further information, please ring me at home, 081-348 3819.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Pat Moorcroft-Cuckle, Educational Researcher

APPENDIX 15 - LETTER AND INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPANT IN VALIDATING
DESCRIPTIONS

7 York Road
HARROGATE HG1 2QA
North Yorkshire

14 December 1992

Dear

You will remember that you took part in my research concerning how parents and teachers help children with reading, during the summer of 1991. I have now nearly finished writing my report and would like to ask one further thing.

I have enclosed a copy of a description I have written for my dissertation and would be very grateful if you would read it and make comments on anything with which you disagree, bearing in mind that we met in the summer of 1991 and the child and situation may have changed since then.

If you have any comments, please mark them on the copy and comment on the paper provided and return them to me in the envelope enclosed. If I do not hear from you by mid-January I will assume that you have no comments to make.

I have used your real name for the moment as the description was easier write this way and I assume it will be easier for you to read.

BUT PLEASE NOTE! YOUR REAL NAMES WILL NOT BE USED IN THE FINAL REPORT - IT WILL BE CHANGED SO THAT YOU CANNOT BE IDENTIFIED.

May I thank you very much for taking part in my research - it has provided new information on how parents and teachers help children learn to read.

Yours sincerely

Ms Pat Cuckle

PLEASE READ THE DESCRIPTION

IF YOU DISAGREE WITH THE WAY I HAVE DESCRIBED ANYTHING PLEASE MARK IT ON THE COPY WITH A LETTER

NOTE THE PAGE AND LETTER BELOW AND SAY BRIEFLY WHY YOU DISAGREE

Page and letter

Why I disagree

INSTRUCTIONS TO HELPER FOR VALIDATING DESCRIPTIONSCHECKING THE TAPED INTERVIEW AGAINST THE WRITTEN DESCRIPTION

IT WILL BE BEST IF THE TASK CAN ALL BE DONE IN ONE QUIET SITTING WITHOUT ASKING FOR THE OPINION OF ANYONE ELSE

THE ENTIRE TASK SHOULD NOT TAKE MORE THAN ONE HOUR

PLEASE CARRY OUT THE TASK IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER

- 1) Listen to the tape recording
- 2) Read the description
- 3) If you there is anything in the written description that you disagree with please mark it in the margin with a number.
- 4) If you can, say briefly below why you disagree with what is written making reference to the number in the margin.

Number
reference

Reason for disagreeing

APPENDIX 16 Transcript of interview with Case 1 parents.
 For description see pages 110-115

- 1 PC Andrew reads aloud as a regular activity - how do you think
 2 that helps him with his reading? I think you say he repeats
 3 books - or he knows them by heart, but you call that reading
 4 in some way -
- 5 Pa Yes he likes to talk through books - likes to go through books
 6 that haven't actually any words - he likes to chat through a
 7 book and look at the pictures and see what's happening. He may
 8 pick up the odd word and he may recognise the odd word -
- 9 PC So do you think its helping him?
- 10 Pa Well it's keeping the interest in books - he loves reading
 11 books. You don't have to encourage him, he just picks them up.
- 12 PC But you think he's learning to recognise some words as well?
- 13 Ma I don't actually believe that he is really trying to recognise
 14 - is recognising words. He seems to have a very good memory so
 15 if somebody has read a book to him - a simple book like this
 16 one, for example, somebody has obviously read him this book
 17 because he can go through this book - he can tell me it's "up
 18 a hill" "up a path" "up a ladder" but he soon falls foul
 19 because this is "up the branches" so he's not reading any of
 20 these words he's doing it all from memory. So ... if you ask
 21 him to point to any of these words, he really can't tell you
 22 which word it is.
- 23 PC So do you think him doing that, going through a book and saying
 24 what it is - what it says - helps in any way? Or is it just a
 25 question of him keeping an interest in books?
- 26 Ma I think it's keeping him interested in books. In some ways,
 27 these books for reading as far as I .. in my experience with
 28 Andrew are almost too complicated. He had a very simple book
 29 where it had - the last word was "en" and then each page - it
 30 began with different letters - it had "den" and "pen" and so
 31 on. Now, that was a book where I thought he was making a lot
 32 of progress in reading. Because once he'd got pronunciation of
 33 the "en" - and he knows the first letter is "pee" then he can
 34 do 'P' "en"/pen 'd' "en"/den, whatever it was, Ben, the name of
 35 the duck whatever it was, so that was very simple, three letter
 36 words.
- 37 PC But that's quite an advanced skill - putting words together in
 38 that way.
- 39 Ma It may well be, but that's the only time I felt that he's
 40 actually making progress with actual reading. These other
 41 books - its ... actually memory that seems to be coming to the
 42 fore. That's my only observation - that I have to say about
 43 it.
- 44 Pa That book you have there - it was quite startling - it was the
 45 first time obviously he was reading. Pronouncing the words and
 46 making up a new word. But it also helped because there wasn't
 47 perhaps a picture there to recognise. Because I often get the
 48 feeling that he looks at the picture and makes a pretty good
 49 guess what the words are going to be.
- 50 Ma But there was a picture there - but if it was a picture of ...
 51 if it was a pen then it wasn't the most predominant think in
 52 the picture. The pen was in the picture but there were other
 53 things like ducks or pond and trees so ... he'd have to be able
 54 to pronounce the word in order to find the pen in the picture -

- 1 Pa that's right and say "pen" yes
- 2 Ma Because he couldn't just look at the picture and work out what
3 the word was, because there were lots of other objects in the
4 picture.
- 5 PC So don't you think there is any value attached to looking at a
6 picture - using that to guess a word?
- 7 Pa Oh yes, I think so - on the basis of being - enjoying books and
8 - I try to encourage him that the words are the key to the
9 picture - but I'm not sure he's got that - he's made the link
10 ...
- 11 Ma No -
- 12 Pa I don't think he has.
- 13 PC Do you know whether he knows - does he have an idea whether
14 he's reading the words or reading the picture?
- 15 Pa Primarily he reads the picture.
- 16 PC It's often surprising when you ask children how late they go on
17 thinking they are reading the picture - they are reading the
18 picture the words are incidental.
- 19 Pa I just wonder what it would be like to have a book with just
20 words and not a picture - and see if he could work out the
21 story from the words.
- 22 PC You read to him on a number of different occasions - in the
23 course of the week - do you think you reading aloud to him
24 helps with his reading?
- 25 Pa Well we've said the words and he sees the word - I think it
26 probably does yes - he works out - it gives him an idea what
27 words are all about - that words make up sentences - it's all
28 part of the communication, isn't it? Then it helps - if he
29 hasn't got a picture - it keeps his imagination.
- 30 PC If Andrew brings home a book from School or if he picks up a
31 book he has at home, and he reads to you, how long would you
32 say he would spend reading?
- 33 Ma He could pick up books and spend an hour reading them.
- 34 PC Do you mean reading to you or looking at ... reading books by
35 himself ...
- 36 Ma ... Er
- 37 PC Does he ever get the opportunity to read to an adult for an
38 hour?
- 39 Ma No ... he'd probably read to us - or else he'd be looking
40 through the pictures and making a lot of commentary about
41 what's going on. I don't know whether you'd call that reading
42 - I don't call that reading. His imagination being tied to the
43 picture.
- 44 PC So, using this book, somehow or the other, you might call
45 reading aloud, how long would he spend doing that?
- 46 Ma Well, a book like this, he would quickly go through the pages
47 until he came to the end of the book and then he'd probably do
48 it a second time, and then he'd probably go to the next book.
- 49 Pa He'd go on and on, until he said he'd had enough. He'll do
50 that often ...

- 1 Ma Yes, he loves books - he was very upset today when he went to
2 a friends' - the friend told him he thought books were boring!
3 For Andrew, books are the best thing he can have - He thinks
4 they're better than toys.
- 5 PC You say that he can't really read yet - now section four
6 concerns helping with difficult word. Therefore it's not
7 appropriate -
- 8 Pa Ah, I missed that one out. "What do you (or other) do when you
9 hear reading?" "He can't read!" well, he can't read to me. I
10 mean, if he tells a story to me, I listen to him telling the
11 story, it's a bit like what we were saying earlier on. I'm not
12 convinced he's reading the words, I don't think he is actually
13 reading. If you've gone through it once he'll attempt to read
14 it to you word perfect - but he's not reading it when ... he's
15 memorised it. He might ... it's astonishing ... he will read
16 it right through, when he might have heard it, remembered it,
17 from three weeks before. So in that sense I didn't think he
18 was reading.
- 19 PC Well then, when he's repeating a story, however you describe
20 it, would you help him with a word he'd gone wrong with?
- 21 Pa We'd speak through the syllables, then he'd enjoy getting his
22 tongue round them.
- 23 PC For instance, here he read "up the branches" instead of "up the
24 wall" how would you help him?
- 25 Ma I was doing this with him before you came - I said to Andrew
26 "That's not up the branch" what is that word? And I get him to
27 try and pronounce each of these letters. And usually he
28 doesn't concentrate well enough so I pronounce them for him and
29 he hears the sound. And he says "Ah, yes, that's wall"
- 30 Pa I've done a long one with several syllables, bits in it - I
31 think the word was "distinction" "dis-tinc-shon" and then he'll
32 sort of repeat it about five times to himself - "dis-tinc-shon"
33 and then we went on - you see he enjoys saying the words.
- 34 Ma But, it's not very often, for example this one he got wrong as
35 well - because he wanted this one to be "up the branches" as
36 well - it's not actually very good, pronouncing these letters,
37 to get a word. I mean, basically you'd have to do it for him -
38 because in some ways he's learned the alphabet ay-bee-see-dee
39 that way instead of ah-buh-cuh-duh - so this is a combination
40 of tee-arh-and-ugh - so there again there's the difference
41 between learning to read because you've got the alphabet being
42 pronounced in two different ways, if you like. ay-be-ce-dee or
43 ah-bu-cu-du - I suppose that makes reading a bit difficult
44 trying to pronounce those letters to make a word.
- 45 PC But normally, even if it was quite difficult for him, you'd
46 focus on the sounds?
- 47 Ma Yes
- 48 PC Breaking up words and putting them back together?
- 49 Ma Yes
- 50 Pa He knows that two e's make "ee" and two o's make "oo", but he
51 won't, even ... on their own ... if he sees the word "tree", he
52 won't break it up, he won't build it up
- 53 PC So can you imagine sometime in the future when he has a bank of
54 words that he knows, and he attempts to read some of a book,
55 can you imagine how you might help him with new words - words,
56 would you continue doing that?

- 1 Ma Yes I think we would - break the word up rather than the sounds
2 - and put the sounds together to make the word.
- 3 PC Would you ever say "well it's not up the wall", what is he up -
4 look at the picture? You'd be asking him to guess from the
5 picture rather than from the word.
- 6 Ma Erm ... yes, I might do that as well
- 7 Pa He almost says that without being encouraged - he'll say "oh
8 no" and look at the picture. He might make a wild guess and it
9 might be the next biggest thing in the picture.
- 10 PC So if he's using those books in his folder that he brings home
11 from school, and books from home would you say that he's doing
12 the same things in reading them - does he distinguish in anyway
13 between home books and school books? If he's attempting to
14 read them?
- 15 Ma No, I don't think he does - I think he does the same things.
- 16 Pa No, they are all books - he enjoys them all -
- 17 PC Yes, I've noticed that he's keen on books in the classroom.
- 18 Pa Some of them, you have to make him put them down - like "The
19 Grand Old Duke of York" he knows that off by heart. He was
20 very upset when we lost it once. He knows it by heart, and
21 points to the words as he says them. But if you put that word
22 out of context he won't recognise it.
- 23 PC Do you attach much importance, not so much to books, but to
24 other points he might see around him? Do you think it's
25 important that he should be reading other print as well as
26 books?
- 27 Ma It's difficult isn't it? He'll basically, pick up anything
28 that's in print if it's got colour in it - if it's got pictures
29 in it - if it's got any sort of print he might pick it up. He
30 might - the sort of thing he does is, he obviously copies what
31 we're doing or what Pa's doing, so if everybody is sitting
32 around with a newspaper - he can't approach us, he's pick up a
33 newspaper and attempt to read it - look at it - or a magazine,
34 that might interest him longer - the colour and pictures -
35 especially some sort of scene that he's familiar with.
- 36 PC Is he interested in street signs, or things in supermarkets?
- 37 Pa Yes - we do a bit of that kind of thing. We started off about
38 a year ago reading street signs - we didn't get very far. We'd
39 get Laurier Road L-a-u-r-i-e-r - you don't get Laurier you're
40 back to ... it's hopeless ... you've killed any good ... all
41 ... we gave that up pretty quickly.
- 42 Ma But I mean, you know, he is very interested in knowing what
43 signs say, but for example, if we're out and there's a big
44 billboard with advertisements on it and it's got writing on it,
45 something eye catching he'll say "what does that say?" If
46 there's a road sign he'll often say "what does that say?" So
47 if you like in some ways - if we're going out, if there's
48 writing up the road - in my case, if he was out with me, I
49 probably won't point it out to him, but he will say to me -
50 "what does that say?" So he's quite interested in knowing what
51 things say ...
- 52 PC If we go on now, how does what you've marked fit in with your
53 idea of what reading is?
- 54 Pa I'll tell you what I thought reading was - when Andrew had that
55 book I mentioned before, when Andrew got h-en, that's the first
56 time, when ... I was absolutely astonished, it's the first time

- 1 I'd seen him making sounds up into words. I thought someone
2 had worked a miracle - But I mean, that was quite a dramatic
3 change; I decided for him - it was the first time he was
4 reading. He was making a word - pronouncing the sounds,
5 syllables, and he was making a word and he realised what that
6 word means.
- 7 PC Right ...
- 8 Ma Yes, he's really reading when he can work out new words by
9 sounding
- 10 PA Yes like the "hen" and "pen". He worked the words out for
11 himself and realised what they meant.
- 12 PC So is your idea of reading that they should be able to read
13 words ... independently of any pictures or anything in any
14 situation ...
- 15 Ma Yes
- 16 PC How do you think children learn to read then?
- 17 Ma I think they probably learn to read by ...er... being able to
18 put sounds to words ... sounds to letters ... recognising that
19 certain letters have sounds, putting lots of sounds together
20 and getting words.
- 21 PC How do you think they learn to read the word "through" or
22 "borough", that kind of word ...
- 23 PA I suppose by almost learning by heart - by knowing that word
24 ... you pronounce in a certain way ... like when I was talking
25 about Laurier Road ... learning to read road signs .. I mean
26 ... we got as far as L..a..u... that didn't make up Laurier Road
27 .. you'd recognise that word .. for what it says. Now when we
28 go past that sign, and I say "what does that say" he'll rattle
29 it off to me ... he's recognised it ... he knows it's
30 pronounced in such a way.
- 31 PC Right ... he's holding the whole word in his mind rather than
32 breaking it down.
- 33 Pa Yes, that's right.
- 34 PC So have you any ideas about the order in which these skills
35 come - you're saying that words that are not easy to break down
36 like "Laurier" or "through" or "borough" that kind of word -
37 recognising it as a whole - but you're keen on being able to
38 build up words by sound - have you any ideas about whether
39 those things come in a certain order or do they happen all at
40 once?
- 41 Pa I remember my days when I was five - I remember this business
42 of "cat" and "mat" and the teacher ... sitting on the floor
43 cross-legged ... so I started off doing it that way and I
44 suppose one ... somehow ... developed into recognising that
45 every word was "cat" - "mat".
- 46 Ma I think that children start in a different way - they start
47 with an image - you can see this with Andrew, he thinks about
48 something and tries to draw it ... visualise it ... and that
49 effort of trying to visualise something for drawing, trying to
50 write might be a similar process - in other words, trying to
51 describe something you've got in your imagination, in the
52 mind's eye.
- 53 PC So how do they relate to reading?
- 54 Ma Well, I suppose it would have an image or something and er...
55 you need to be able to... recall what it is that you want to

- 1 say
- 2 PC Moving on then to parents helping: you say that you think
3 parents can help -do you have any reservations about that - Do
4 you think there are any circumstances or parents that can't
5 help, or shouldn't help?
- 6 Ma I think that it is important to know about the method of
7 actually teaching people to read and write - Andrew in the
8 afternoon is looked after by a nanny and she was very keen at
9 one time on getting him to write - and her idea of getting him
10 to write was for her to write down the letters and for him to
11 write a whole string of these letters across the page. Now she
12 never actually taught him how to do an "a" - so when he started
13 to write, you know, he does a tail of the "a" and a bit of the
14 back and bit of the underneath of the "a" - and I think that's
15 really quite detrimental because they then have to re-learn how
16 to write - how to form the letters correctly - so I think it's
17 possible that parents really do need some guidance if they
18 really are going to take on the role of teacher at home - That
19 they don't teach children things that they then have to undo
20 later on ... With writing, I could probably - well I saw what
21 he was doing and I thought what a terrible way for him to start
22 to learn to write - he could form the letters but when it came
23 to trying to join anything up - it will be terribly difficult
24 because of the way he's learning to form the letters. I
25 suppose with reading ... I'm no expert ... I just make it up as
26 I go along ... It might be detrimental instead of actually
27 helping him. I might be inhibiting the process - I don't know
28 -
- 29 PA I feel in my guts that the most important thing is for a child
30 to be happy with books and to enjoy finding things out and I
31 don't think you can go far wrong with that and if a child sits
32 on your knee and reads a book - the child can see the words and
33 as you pronounce the words you point to the words - something
34 might stick in his memory, his subconscious. I don't see you
35 can do any harm. It may not help - but it's not going to do
36 any harm.
- 37 Ma Well look, your sister is a teacher, we were teaching Andrew
38 the alphabet "Ay" "Bee" "Cee" and so on - and she said that's
39 not the way they teach it.
- 40 Pa It should be "ah" "buh" "cuh" -
- 41 Ma Yes, because it's easier to read afterwards - you could say, in
42 some ways. When Andrew has the word "tree" maybe the reason he
43 can't actually pronounce it is because he has this confusion
44 about "Tee" and "tuh"
- 45 Pa Then he gets "Laurier Road" and he gets into big knots -
- 46 Ma OK - but that's not a simple word he can build up easily.
- 47 Pa No -
- 48 PC Children often learn the name and the sound in tandem - without
49 really teaching them.
- 50 Ma If you give Andrew the alphabet he can say "ay-bee-cee to Zed"
51 - but if you ask him to say the sound of those letters, there's
52 lots he can't sound yet
- 53 PC If he is going to use sounding for reading it is important that
54 he learns the sounds - but it sometimes takes children a long
55 time to learn some of the sounds - you can't always understand
56 why some sounds are more different to remember than others or
57 to relate to the written form.
- 58 Pa Some sounds are difficult - we have European relations and they

- 1 find some sounds are dreadfully difficult so it's not
2 surprising Andrew finds them difficult. That must be a
3 difficult thing for them to sound-pronounce.
- 4 PC There are two similar questions - one asks what things do you
5 do at home, the other asks what things have you been asked to
6 do at home. The section where it asks what things do you do -
7 you've ticked quite a lot of them but when it comes to what
8 have you been asked to do by the school it's not been ticked a
9 lot.
- 10 Ma I think that's not fair. From time to time in Andrew's school
11 bag, there is a printed piece of paper which outlines what we
12 should be doing.
- 13 Pa Well I haven't seen it
- 14 Ma Well I have - I have read it - but I didn't retain much of it.
- 15 PC You mean you didn't retain what it asked you to do or you
16 didn't retain the paper.
- 17 Ma I didn't retain in my mind - I must have read it very quickly
18 and put it down somewhere and it disappeared.
- 19 Pa It got binned
- 20 Ma It's not that the school's not giving us anything -
- 21 PC You mean in terms of specific tasks or in general terms?
- 22 Ma Er ...
- 23 PC I haven't been shown what they send home apart from the current
24 books - in some books there's quite a dialogue between parent
25 and teacher - about
- 26 Pa Well we've got our book but they don't ask us to do anything.
27 There reading books - we'll say what we've read
- 28 Ma This piece of paper - it probably does ... does tell us
29 something ... but ... I really don't remember
- 30 PC Right, well - the things you have ticked off are not things
31 you've been asked to do specifically by the school, so what's
32 your reasoning behind doing these things that you do?
- 33 Ma Well, we're keen for Andrew to learn how to read, keen for him
34 to express himself correctly, keen for him to be able to spell
35 and read - for him to have a good command of the English
36 Language - to be able to express himself clearly and
37 accurately.
- 38 PC So what you have ticked off, you see as the early stages in
39 achieving those things.
- 40 Ma Yes -
- 41 Pa Like this evening - his use of the past tense - I can't
42 understand why he used the past tense - and so I corrected it -
43 and he always repeats it the correct way - not because I
44 taught him to but because he always does.
- 45 PC You mean he applied a regular rule to an irregular verb?
- 46 Pa Yes, so I'd always correct him, so that he'd repeat it and
47 always correct himself.
- 48 PC So you say - there's some disagreement as to how much you are
49 instructed to help him, by the school

- 1 Ma Well I suppose - the thing is - perhaps - I can think of two
 2 occasions since Andrew has been at school - a piece of A4 quite
 3 lightly printed - information - I guess it does tell you
 4 something about what we should be aiming to do in teaching your
 5 child to read. And I probably have scanned through it - but I
 6 can't, to the best of my ability, remember what it actually
 7 said.
- 8 Pa We have this book which goes too and fro - but there are never
 9 any specific instructions - any expectations as to what we
 10 should or should not be doing - we just write our comments and
 11 they might put their comments back. They may be fairly subtle
 12 comments as to what we could do - we don't pick them up as
 13 instructions - maybe they sink into our subconscious and maybe
 14 we do it differently.
- 15 Ma Yes but, really, we just write ...
- 16 Pa Enjoyed this book, or had difficulty with this or got bored
 17 with this or ... and ... if they sensed we'd got something
 18 wrong ... or we were doing something that's not important -
 19 they'd correct us and say "yes, it is important - because" and
 20 if that's instruction - yes, we take that on board. But they
 21 won't ... it's very much left to us .. What we do with the
 22 books he comes home with.
- 23 Ma I think the comments are basically chit-chat you know -
- 24 Pa Yes, keeping in touch with the teacher.
- 25 Ma I fill this in basically so we can get some more books - a
 26 different set of books.
- 27 PC Do you think at this stage and later on that parents can offer
 28 anything as far as reading and writing are concerned, that the
 29 school can't offer?
- 30 Ma I think perhaps the school is back to ... I think children need
 31 to be motivated and they need to be encouraged to build upon,
 32 perhaps, what they learn at school and I think parents can help
 33 to reinforce that by taking an interest in their homework and
 34 how they do it, how they apply themselves to actually doing it.
- 35 PC You mean in a way that teachers at school can't?
- 36 Ma I would say they can help ... teachers can certainly get
 37 children's interest and attention in the classroom, but when
 38 the child leaves that school environment, and comes home, that
 39 could all be sort of ? (put behind them) and I do think that
 40 children do have to be ... that's my opinion ... that parents
 41 play a strong role in keeping children interested in school
 42 work.
- 43 Pa Or applying what they've learned at school to the outside world
 44 so its not in boxed compartments ... "that's school" and when
 45 you come home you switch off and you're in a different world.
 46 What you've learned at school you can relate to what goes on
 47 outside.
- 48 Ma I think homework is part of the educational process that
 49 parents ... actually have a role to play there - by making sure
 50 that - you know - that homework is done ... properly ... that
 51 the proper time is devoted to it ... that children don't see it
 52 as a chore ... see it as fun if you like - it's finding out ...
- 53 Pa You can carry on - you can go to the shop round the corner and
 54 read the label on the packet. That kind of thing - its quite
 55 useful - carrying on into the real world what you learn in the
 56 classroom - when I was at school what was in school stayed in
 57 school, when I came out of school the doors came down ... and
 58 it was a different world outside. I'm not saying that was my

- 1 mother's fault - but that was the way it was.
- 2 PC What do you think the school is offering, as far as reading and
3 writing is concerned, that perhaps you as parents can't offer
4 to your children?
- 5 Ma They're longer, they have the whole day to teach them at
6 school. After all, we're not professional people - they know
7 better than we, if you like, the best way to teach the
8 different rules??
- 9 Pa Well different children learn different ways -
- 10 PC You're talking about professional expertise
- 11 Pa Yes - Different children may learn different ways. I mean
12 Andrew may have a difficulty, for all I know, he may be word-
13 blind or other children may have another sort of problem and
14 this is something they'll learn in different ways. I don't
15 suppose all children will learn the same way or will pick
16 things up at different speeds. I mean, everyone's different,
17 so I don't see how one rule can apply to everybody.
- 18 PC So the teacher can judge perhaps the best thing to offer to the
19 child.
- 20 Pa Yes, from experience of many children and so being able to
21 help. Whereas we only have experience of one child or most
22 parents probably wouldn't have experience of more than three
23 children.
- 24 Ma But parents have the experience of their own .. of the way
25 they've been taught and they probably apply that to their
26 child. It may be that the way ... I learned ... I, for
27 example, am a person that can learn things very easily from
28 books - whereas my mother would absolutely hate that as a way
29 of learning. She would prefer to be in a group of people ...
30 to learn that way ... where there's more interaction, exchange
31 of ideas ... Perhaps a more experimental way of doing it. So
32 perhaps people do learn in different ways - so maybe the
33 methods that I would apply to my child ... might not be
34 appropriate. Maybe he needs to learn another way ... in a
35 different way. A teacher with her experience would,
36 presumably, know the best way for a child to learn. That may
37 be totally idealistic, but when a teacher stands up in front of
38 a class, they don't give individual tuition to each child, they
39 have a standard way of delivering something. And there may be
40 an opportunity, as a teacher works her way round a class to
41 give a more individual approach to each child. In a class of
42 forty, it may not be applicable. But having said that, if you
43 say what do parents offer, maybe if a child has a more
44 individualistic way of learning - that's where the parent comes
45 in.
- 46 PC Given that the parents understand how the child does learn - in
47 other words spend more time on the individual -
- 48 Ma Aspects
- 49 PC Yes
- 50 PA Andrew is more inclined to play around with us in, I suspect,
51 the relatively formal environment of school, I think he ... his
52 character is such that he'll pay attention. Whereas he'll muck
53 about at home, I don't think he'll muck about at school. he
54 hates anyone in authority to tick him off. Where I think he'll
55 get on much better at school than at home.
- 56 PC Moving on to the end - these are what I call influences from
57 outside - things that are not to do with the child in
58 particular or your ideas about what you do now, that influence

- 1 whether you help or how you help - how do those things
2 influence you. You've marked the child's adult future to do
3 with Andrew -
- 4 Pa I don't think other parents influence us ...
- 5 PC Why do those things you've marked influence you?
- 6 Pa Look at it round the other way. I expect it reflects my values
7 rather than the school's. That's why - other parents - I like
8 to think I do what I think is right not what other people think
9 are right. I'm not sure about the National curriculum - I
10 suppose the same thing goes - that's fine - but I suppose I'm
11 too big-headed, I think well, I do what I think right. The
12 same goes for society in general. I suppose my concern for the
13 child's future, that he can communicate you see that comment at
14 the bottom is perhaps not wholly relevant. I meet too many
15 people who can't communicate and it's tragic. It's horrific.
16 I work out in Essex and I've given up now employing people from
17 - (fresh from education) gist. I'm homing in on employing
18 people who are married, had kids and are coming back to work -
19 I've given up teaching 18-19 year olds how to speak English -
20 The outcome is so appalling - a child can't communicate in it's
21 own language - They may speak some French or Spanish or
22 Portuguese but if they don't speak English - if people can't
23 understand what they are talking about - its useless. If we
24 want to succeed we need to be able to handle our own language.
25 To read and to use it properly. I know people - there are so
26 many languages interconnected
- 27 PC So you really take the view - you are making sure he starts
28 early - to get the skills he needs ...
- 29 Pa Not to rush him - to start earlier than he wants to - but when
30 he's got the mental wherewithal to be able to do it so that he
31 can ...
- 32 Ma Its very important - it's like we said earlier - if you learn
33 something try and learn it correctly to start off with,
34 otherwise you've got to re-do what you've actually - learn it
35 again - and that's always a difficult process - it's quite
36 difficult to break habits which have actually been established
37 and I suppose our job is to make sure he gets a proper
38 foundation in the English language early. That's not to say we
39 want to push it, but if he says something incorrectly we want
40 to correct him so that he doesn't develop the habit of using
41 adverbs incorrectly or adjectives incorrectly. Some say you
42 shouldn't interfere with children's language - just let them
43 talk and it will all - their language .. I don't actually
44 believe that - as soon as they start talking they should be
45 taught to speak correctly and be corrected.
- 46 Pa They'll find out the language themselves, they'll perhaps find
47 out how to read themselves - but you shouldn't get into bad
48 habits - like in that example I gave you of the person who said
49 "I do not know, nothing" Many people say "I don't know nothing"
50
- 51 Ma The incredible thing is I work ...
- 52 Pa It may be the opposite of what the girl said
- 53 Ma I work with university graduates and they graduated say a year
54 or two ago - some of them are from Cambridge and they cannot
55 write a letter - they cannot express themselves. Their English
56 is horrendously woolly ... their spelling is atrocious ... and
57 this summer we're trying to get computer programmes to help
58 them ... we don't have the time to teach them, so we have to
59 get, you know, these programmes to help them to learn about
60 grammar, learn about spelling and punctuation. And people have
61 got ... have been through our academic system ... some of them

- 1 have been to the highest places.
- 2 PC What ...
- 3 Ma ... It's terrible for business because if you work in a
4 business environment, how do you get business, how do you keep
5 your clients in times of recession ... you know, clients are
6 not going to stay with you if you can't write a report
7 correctly, express yourself grammatically. Communicate what
8 your thoughts are. If you go and see a client and you want to
9 explain a proposal to them, you've got ... they can't guess
10 what you want to say - you've got to be convincing about what
11 you say ...
- 12 Pa You've got to say it quickly - you might be able to say what
13 you want to say in two sides of foolscap - but that's too long.
14 You've got to get over what you want to say in two paragraphs
15 because they won't read a third. And if you're just woolly in
16 the first two, you've lost it, the interest.
- 17 Ma OK, that's a style of writing. But communication just cannot
18 be over emphasised - it's interesting that you pick up a
19 newspaper and just read it through. If you start circling
20 punctuation that's incorrect, spelling that's incorrect, badly
21 formed sentences, sentences that just hang in the air - you'd
22 be surprised in the quality newspapers - the less quality
23 newspapers are often better written in that the language is
24 simple - you don't have any difficulty in understanding what
25 they are trying to say
- 26 Pa I'd say briefly and quickly ...
- 27 PC I understand from your checklist ...
- 28 Pa Mind you, my grammar is sloppy - I say this with feeling - when
29 I have been at work and I've been on the receiving end of
30 something, say like clients, I've often said this is sloppy,
31 this is sloppy and one thing I say - I think back to my own
32 schooling - I think of the essays I wrote.
- 33 Ma This is nothing to do with reading
- 34 Pa I know it's not - yet it's an extension, part of the same thing
35 - this is sloppy English - no one ever corrected me - I was
36 always told it was sloppy - but no-one ever told me why - and
37 I went to a posh school. And this is why I correct Andrew with
38 his speech because I'm aware - no-one ever corrected me.
- 39 Ma You see one of the things - if we're going completely off the
40 subject - I don't know how English is actually taught. One of
41 the subjects I had to do was Latin and I - it's a dead subject
42 now, but one of the great benefits of Latin I found was, that
43 helped me tremendously with my English was that you learned
44 about the structure of sentences. You learned what a noun was
45 and what an adverb was, what a verb was, what an adjective is.
46 And all those components that make up a sentence. And so
47 understanding ...
- 48 PC Didn't you learn that in English?
- 49 Ma No - I never learned that in English - but having learned that
50 in Latin it made me so much more aware of language and aware
51 of, you know, "was I using that word correctly if it was an
52 adjective or an adverb". My mother teaches French - she's
53 French - and she says that she has to - children come from all
54 ages, from seven to adults and she said most of her lessons
55 began with teaching people the basic components of a sentence
56 because with French you've got to know about nouns and verbs,
57 and adverbs and adjectives because, you know, they agree - you
58 have to make the necessary agreements. She says that she's
59 never had anybody that really knows the components of a

- 1 sentence. And I ... feel that if people were taught.. Maybe
 2 they do read the components of sentences in the English
 3 language - if people were taught - then perhaps people wouldn't
 4 make mistakes about - double negatives, and not use adverbs
 5 incorrectly ...
- 6 Pa I never learned this - it was only when adjectives and adverbs
 7 were, and prepositions ...
- 8 PC Really
- 9 Pa And as for subjunctives, I've never done that in English -
- 10 PC My secondary schooling consisted of 4 double periods a week
 11 with nothing but parts of speech, parsing , subjects objects
 12
- 13 Ma But what about the teenager who comes out of school now - do
 14 they learn that ...
- 15 PC Maybe not as much of it. But they learn the basic parts of
 16 speech and sentence structure ...
- 17 Ma The message hasn't been driven home then. You ask them to
 18 write a sentence - not a sentence, a letter and express an idea
 19 in a letter and it's littered with sentences that hang in the
 20 air. Adjectives, adverbs used incorrectly - you know its not
 21 as though I'm dealing with people who've got 2 CSEs or
 22 something
- 23 PC I don't know what they spend their time doing but
- 24 Ma Because they're scientists but ... that's an indictment of the
 25 Education System -
- 26 Pa That people specialise at 16
- 27 Ma That something is wrong with the basic educational level if
 28 they can't express themselves properly.
- 29 Pa Anyway - this isn't getting us far
- 30 PC Well it is, because you wrote the comment and I brought it up.
 31 I haven't come across many parents of four year olds who - have
 32 such particular concerns for the future, and I wondered how you
 33 saw it in relation to Andrew's present reading.
- 34 Pa We may be unusual in that I'm in the business of handling
 35 youngsters when they come off the school production line. I
 36 don't want my child to be speaking English like that, whatever
 37 his qualification or whatever school he goes to.
- 38 Ma I think that whether your child turns out to be bright or not -
 39 every child should be able to master the English language and
 40 speak it properly. There's no reason why they shouldn't.
- 41 PC Anyway - to get onto Andrew - are you pleased with the way the
 42 school is handling his reading so far? And how they ask you to
 43 help?
- 44 Pa Well, it's all entirely informal.
- 45 PC Are you happy with that? Or do you think they should be
 46 sitting them down and teaching C-A-T spells "cat"?
- 47 Ma My expectations at the moment are not particularly that they
 48 should be reading. I don't expect him to be reading. And I
 49 would say from the books that he brings back - they are
 50 generating an interest in books and therefore hopefully in the
 51 future he'll be reading. Therefore, as far as I'm concerned if
 52 that's achieving that aim I'm quite satisfied with that. But

- 1 when he goes to reception class - I would expect more formal
2 teaching about reading and writing. I don't see at the moment
3 really having, this is my conception, them really having formal
4 reading and writing in school. There's a sort of general
5 introduction to these things and building up an interest which
6 they can then develop when they get into the reception class.
- 7 PC Do you feel the same Pa, or would you prefer him to be having
8 more formal teaching?
- 9 Pa Oh no, not at this age. Not at 4. I know what happens when he
10 gets to school - he goes into a corner with his pals to muck
11 about. Unless he's concentrates like he does here. He'll need
12 to be guided to concentrate and develop his skills. I don't
13 think they'll just come by sitting in a corner playing with
14 bricks or playing rag with this pals. There's a certain amount
15 of structure that I'm sure will be there and guidance ...
16 because certainly that child, if he's told - if he's spoken to
17 reasonably sharply to do something he'll do it - if he's not,
18 he won't.
- 19 PC So you wouldn't want to see anything particularly different at
20 this stage?
- 21 Pa Not at this stage
- 22 PC But you're hoping for ... or expecting a more formal element
- 23 Ma Yes
- 24 Pa Yes - and guidance and something more demanding for him. If he
25 thinks .. if he's expected to do something he'll rise to it
26 but if he isn't given a goal he'll just muck about.
- 27 Ma You see I think the times come - If you say "Andrew, what did
28 you do at school today?" he'll say "oh, I played", his
29 perception is that he's not doing anything different at school
30 than he does either when he's here or at somebody else's house.
- 31 PC So how do you think he's progressing - in reading?
- 32 Pa I don't think he has for quite some time - Apart from the book
33 he read through - Hen and Pen - I was very startled and I was
34 extremely pleased - that was the first progress I should think
35 in probably 6 months - that he'd done in reading.
- 36 Ma I don't know when you think he is progressing - he's developed
37 a very great interest in books and making up stories - he lets
38 his imagination run wild - he absolutely loves the books that
39 have no words in them where you have to make up the story -
40 that suits him right down to the ground but I don't really
41 think he's learning to read.
- 42 PC You say he's developed a great interest in books - do you mean
43 he's developed that from being at nursery or is that something
44 that's developed outside of nursery. Would you say, obviously
45 he's keen on books now, has he always been like that?
- 46 Ma I think it's something that - we have certainly developed in
47 that, not consciously, we have an interest in books and perhaps
48 we tend more to buy him books than buy him toys and he loves to
49 be read to. We do quite a lot of that to him - and I think
50 that's certainly reinforced by the fact that he brings books
51 back from school. So we have encouraged the interest in books.
- 52 Pa Yes, and the nanny we had first of all was very good like that
53 - she would - from the age of about 1½-2 would have him on her
54 knee and they'd be reading books in the morning, so that would
55 be a special treat before she went off and did whatever else.
56 So from the beginning reading was something good to do. And
57 when he went to bed he liked being with us because we'd been

- 1 out at work. And that was the thing, reading the books
2 together. So I think that from an early age books were seen as
3 something good
- 4 PC You've already said that he's shown an interest in other
5 written things around him and you say you regard this building
6 up of words as a major step in reading. Can you think of any
7 way that you might help him to develop that skill or encourage
8 him to use this new skill that he has - in being able to see
9 how words are similar or building up new words. Do you think
10 it's important to encourage him - how would you do that.
- 11 Pa Well - for instance when we go round the local shop and help
12 ourselves - we look for the obvious signs - something simple
13 like OMO or SURF, something simple like that, you know in big
14 letters, we spell them out. He enjoys life - you have to slow
15 him down to concentrate - he's far more interested in rushing
16 off - and careering round. It's really a case of slowing him
17 down.
- 18 Ma Well, you know, we get these books from school and we do try
19 and encourage him to sound words and try to work out what the
20 word says - building up on sounds.
- 21 PC But I'm thinking of this particular thing he can do, like
22 always recognise that "E-N" says "en" so if you put "p" in
23 front it says "PEN" or "H" in front says "HEN" - can you think
24 of any way that, if you'd want to, that you could just give him
25 more of that kind of thing?
- 26 Ma Yes, I think you could do that - building up with small 3
27 letter words like that - where there's some common sound in all
28 the words and then building up to bigger words or using that
29 sort of idea to make up a sentence.
- 30 PC Using magnetic letters - they are useful for changing the
31 beginning or the end of a word - because the letters you leave
32 behind are very solid and the child can see the other letters
33 being physically moved. They can move them themselves and be
34 involved in changing the word.
- 35 Would you say, as far as you know what's going on at school,
36 that what Andrew is doing at school and home as far as reading
37 and writing are concerned, are they the same kind of thing or
38 would you say he's doing different things at home and school?
- 39 Pa I'm not often down at school. I find it difficult - if you ask
40 him - he'll say he played - so as far as one can gather - if
41 you could believe what he says - he just plays all day.
42 Whereas when I've actually been in there at school hours and
43 I'd actually seen them sitting down doing something that wasn't
44 play - then I don't think that's strictly true. So I'm not
45 quite ... with school. I think the tempo of what we do at home
46 is the same as at school, even if it's fun.
- 47 PC So can you comment on whether there are any conflicts between
48 what you do at home and school?
- 49 Pa I don't think there are any - the atmosphere is the same.
- 50 Ma Well you don't know - you don't know what goes on there
- 51 Pa Yes - fine
- 52 PC What I'm getting at, and I suppose this may apply really more
53 to older children where you might say that they do things more
54 formally in school - there may be problems in that you are
55 asking them to do one thing and the school is doing other
56 things, as far as reading and writing are concerned. What I
57 want to know is whether that cause any difficulty for the
58 child?

- 1 Pa We don't force a different programme on him at home. All we do
 2 is follow what's given by the school, so we do the books. We
 3 don't do anything else. We might do letters and writing but as
 4 I see it there's no conflict because we follow -, OK we don't
 5 get written instructions about what, to do - but we work out
 6 what's wanted.
- 7 PC Is there anything that you'd like to change, regarding perhaps,
 8 having more time to spend on reading and writing, or having
 9 more instruction from school or having perhaps more formal
 10 instruction like workshops - would you like them to tell you
 11 more about how they go about teaching reading and writing -
 12 would you find that helpful or are you happy doing what you're
 13 doing?
- 14 Ma Perhaps it would be helpful to find out more about how they
 15 child is being taught in school if only, when you're with the
 16 child at home you're with the child at home you're doing
 17 homework or any other activity, that it's difficult to
 18 reinforce what they are doing at school. I think that would be
 19 helpful. I do think the workshops and that sort of thing, I
 20 don't know how much variety there is - I've certainly had the
 21 feeling for the last term or so that - that he's a bit bored.
 22 Sometimes that's a comment he makes to me.
- 23 Pa Perhaps because some of his contemporaries - the older ones and
 24 the brighter ones have gone into reception. So he's with
 25 younger kids so he may feel they're a bit childish - children
 26 are very perceptive.
- 27 Yes, all his friends have gone up - you see he's the 3rd of
 28 September so he's still in nursery. So you see there's sort of
 29 a sense of "I've got the baby's book" But you have to come to
 30 terms with that sooner or later in life - so might as well get
 31 used to it at the age of 4.
- 32 PC Is there anything else that you'd like to add that you haven't
 33 said already? Any comment you'd like to make, or anything you
 34 would like to ask?
- 35 Ma Well, this is probably off the record - but is this cut-off
 36 point between being born on 29 August or 4 September - is there
 37 any point in saying for an individual child looking at him,
 38 saying well he should be in the year above or the year below?

APPENDIX 17 Transcript of interview with Case 1 teacher
 - for description see page 119-126

- 1 PC: First of all, reading aloud when children read aloud to you
 2 how do you think that helps them?
- 3 T: Well you were there at one of the sessions when Ruth and Helen
 4 and Andrew - we actually use reading aloud as a pleasurable
 5 activity that the children choose to do for themselves. It
 6 helps them understand that reading is a source of pleasure, to
 7 try and take away the pressure of ... reading aloud word
 8 perfect and trying to encourage a sort of group participation
 9 where each child guesses ... or if they know the word, they can
 10 recognise it. They do it as a group rather than as an
 11 individual which we hope will give them the confidence to
 12 attempt to try it ... to read for themselves, to become early
 13 readers.
- 14 PC: Can you say how much time they might spend doing that kind of
 15 reading aloud - especially Helen and Andrew?
- 16 T: It varies from day to day and what activities are on offer in
 17 the nursery. Because we do give them a free choice in what they
 18 do. But apart from the fact that they have half an hour each
 19 day approximately in a group situation - they might spend
 20 anything from five minutes to half an hour, even an hour. Helen
 21 and Andrew are both quite avid readers and enjoy sitting down
 22 reading either by themselves or reading aloud to other children
 23 or in a group situation. And they are both capable of staying
 24 in the book corner for 40-50 minutes, even more maybe.
- 25 PC: During that time they wouldn't be constantly reading aloud?
- 26 T: No, it would be shared with an adult.
- 27 PC: Would that be most days?
- 28 T: Yes, I really think that those two in particular would spend a
 29 lot of time in the reading corner. Helen particularly enjoys it
 30 with her mother.
- 31 PC: Now you read aloud yourself to children on a number of
 32 different occasions during the week, using different kinds of
 33 materials. Do you think your reading aloud to them helps them
 34 to read?
- 35 T: Yes, apart from just ... sharing a story with them, that in
 36 itself is a very powerful tool for enabling children to want to
 37 read ... the power of a story, the enjoyment of a story ...
 38 there's also ... we may use shared books whereby we ... if we've
 39 got a favourite book at the time, it may be blown up - the
 40 print made bigger. We may read it as a group situation, the
 41 children following words with their fingers ... they can do
 42 that. Then there's nursery rhymes that we make bigger as well,
 43 that enable children to ... to sit and contribute as much as
 44 they want to in a group situation.
- 45 PC: I don't know how appropriate it is to ask about helping with
 46 difficult words, because you've already said that the emphasis
 47 is not on reading words accurately. But for Helen or Andrew,
 48 does that ever arise, that they'd want help to read a
 49 particular word?
- 50 T: I think it does - I mean our policy is on the whole that they
 51 read for meaning rather than particular words, and we try and
 52 encourage them. But you may find from time to time that they
 53 may have an interest in the phonetics of words or letters.
 54 Andrew has been known to say "That's an 'a' - that's the same
 55 as the beginning of mine. And that's a 'd', that's in mine." Or
 56 alternatively he may say that's an 'ay' or a 'dee'. We help
 57 them at whatever level they introduce to us and take them on

- 1 from there. So if there was that interest there we would then
2 go on and point out more things in the book. But we wouldn't,
3 as such, introduce it unless we thought they were ready and
4 able to take that information and use it for themselves.
- 5 PC: So it's really coming from them anyway, whatever they show they
6 are capable of understanding or want to do the you pick up on
7 it. You wouldn't particularly ask them to guess a word or sound
8 a word?
- 9 T: No, not as such. You would see where their interests lay or
10 their capabilities in these group reading situations, that you
11 could focus on when you were alone and it was more individual.
- 12 PC: Not everyone agrees on how children start reading and what is
13 important for them. What's your idea about how children learn
14 to read?
- 15 T: Well I'm still not convinced of any one way. I think there are
16 a majority ... erm, a variety of ways and we try and help
17 children with where they are. We, broadly speaking, try and
18 encourage our children to ... something that we have written
19 down and give to parents ... do you want me to read them? It's
20 things like ... we try and encourage that books are a source of
21 pleasure ... stories and books have pattern and structure and
22 meaning can be given to text and illustrations. But we also try
23 to develop, not only with children, but sometimes just as
24 importantly, with parents ... things ... that print carries a
25 message that makes sense; that the same print carries the same
26 message; that sequences of words have meaning. That speech and
27 print make up a thing called word ... spaces between words on
28 a page ... a spoken word matches one written word ... and
29 introduce things like technical vocabulary about reading ...
30 letters, full stops, capital letters ... that sort of thing.
31 Left pages are read before right pages. Turning the pages over
32 in order. The print's read from top to bottom and illustrations
33 can be read for meaning to support the message of the text. And
34 we try ... although this isn't the only thing, this is the
35 backbone of the things we are trying to start off.
- 36 PC: So do you regard that a prerequisite ... before they start to
37 decode ...
- 38 T: Not always, no. As I said, I think there's a variety of ways
39 ... maybe some children might go straight in and be ... you
40 know ... we had one child that, all he was interested in was
41 the phonetics and yet at the same time he didn't have the
42 corresponding text and word or whatever ... and yet his
43 advancement in phonetics and the alphabet was very good. No, I
44 think you try and support where they are and then try and give
45 them an all round understanding of the other skills.
- 46 PC: As for parents helping with reading is concerned - you think in
47 general parents can help - do you have any reservations about
48 that?
- 49 T: Erm ... no ... I think parents probably know children at our
50 age much better than we actually know them, so their
51 understanding of their children is much more in depth than ours
52 can or will ever be, just as teachers. And I think as such you
53 have to form some sort of partnership where you both want the
54 best for the child and you're trying to find a way round to
55 help the child the most. I mean, obviously in my mind there are
56 certain things I'd like to happen. I would never prescribe to
57 a parent. I would just advise and give suggestions.
- 58 PC: So in general you wouldn't expect to find any parent that, for
59 one reason or another, you'd prefer not to ... bother helping?
- 60 T: Well we have such a good dialogue with our parents. If there
61 was something, and I can't think of something at the moment,

1 that I really strongly disagreed with, there would be time
 2 because we see our parents on a daily basis to talk about this.
 3 Not in the sense that "you're doing wrong and I know what's
 4 right", but more in a sense of "have you ever thought of
 5 another way of doing this" or "could you imagine what this is
 6 going to lead to or the child's understanding". Something like
 7 that ... we also have a very good PACT system whereby the book
 8 goes home every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and through that
 9 we keep up quite a good dialogue with our parents about a lot
 10 of issues - even those not related to reading.

11 PC: So just suppose a hypothetical situation where you had a parent
 12 who was ... saw reading as cracking the phonic code and had
 13 perhaps high, unrealistic expectations at 3 and a half ...
 14 expected them to crack that code ... and you felt that the
 15 child was being made anxious and not really progressing. You
 16 wouldn't really see that as a problem to stop - you'd expect a
 17 way in to talk about what else they might do.

18 T: Yes. I'd never say stop. If I felt that strongly about it I'd
 19 most probably say "You know if you put too much pressure on
 20 your child at this stage he may back off from reading. He may
 21 not be interested". The usual line - the common sense line.

22 PC: So it really comes down to communications.

23 T: Yes, I think communications are very important. Yes definitely.

24 PC: So to what extent do you instruct parents on how to use PACT
 25 books and what to do with them?

26 T: I think it comes from ... just experience of using it and
 27 you're quite aware of our PACT book system and we try and
 28 encourage parents to use them as much as possible. If, for one
 29 reason or another, parents aren't using them, we put a notice
 30 in. We'd ask them "how is your child getting on?" and sometimes
 31 we'd most probably put a bit more "does she enjoy reading the
 32 books with her sister at night?" You know, a way in, trying ...
 33 because you know I think sometimes they could be a bit
 34 frightening for parents who expect ... or who rather remember
 35 their own reading ... at a more advanced stage and feel that
 36 their children ought to be reading ... We try and make it quite
 37 a general thing to get them interested and get them to see the
 38 value of putting things down so that they can look at it in
 39 months to come and can see the progress or whatever.

40 PC: So in a way, you'd be again taking the lead from the parents as
 41 you take the lead from the child and start to build on what
 42 they're prepared to do.

43 T: As a general rule I'd say that, yes. But obviously there's the
 44 occasion when the comment was coming out over and over again,
 45 you might put a suggestion in to try something, to do something
 46 different.

47 PC: But you would take each parent ...

48 T: As individuals to be dealt with in different ways, yes.

49 PC: And you'd expect different things from them?

50 T: Yes, because obviously each home life is different and the time
 51 they spend on maths or English or whatever is different.

52 PC: So in general - for Helen's and Andrew's parents, what would
 53 you be ... asking them to do or talking about them doing at
 54 this stage?

55 T: At this stage for Andrew - Andrew and us have had a very
 56 lengthy dialogue because Andrew had been in the nursery for
 57 quite a while. I feel that we've built up a good relationship

- 1 relaying information, fears, ideas and everything in the books.
2 Did you want a copy of it?
- 3 PC: Yes please, that would be useful.
- 4 T: At the moment Helen's PACT book is an unusual one. I mean she
5 hasn't been here long and the family as a whole, I think, are
6 concerned about our reading scheme. So we're actually using
7 that in different way.
- 8 PC: I'll probably ask you about that later. How would you describe
9 most of your parents? You've actually ticked quite a number of
10 those brief descriptions. You've got quite a ...
- 11 T: I feel our parents are quite supportive and I think it comes
12 from ... there's a lot of things in a nursery situation - we're
13 in the lucky position of seeing the parents very often, twice
14 a day - maybe more if they're coming in to help to do things in
15 the nursery which maybe other members in the school may not
16 have. We have very easy access to our parents and as such an
17 informal relationship and atmosphere builds up so that
18 information is passed on quite easily.
- 19 PC: So would you describe these two parents in those general terms,
20 are they supportive?
- 21 T: They are supportive of their children's learning, yes - both of
22 them.
- 23 PC: So you're quite happy with the way they are helping?
- 24 T: Yes, I see no problem with what's going on at home as such.
25 Andrew's family spend a lot of time with Andrew reading.
26 Luckily for us, we spend a lot of time corresponding in the
27 PACT book because Andrew's parents don't actually come into the
28 nursery very often. I just tend to see Melissa who is their
29 nanny ... so that's really valuable. And they spend a lot of
30 time, or so it seems from their interest and enthusiasm in the
31 PACT book. Helen's parents obviously spend a lot of time with
32 Helen on books at home reading.
- 33 PC: But you say that the family doesn't like the books provided
34 from school?
- 35 T: Yes. I don't think we've any quarrel in the ideology. We both
36 agree that the school should be keeping more up to date - more
37 "real books", quotation marks, in school for children to read.
38 And I don't think they feel Helen's happy with books we have on
39 offer. I think they feel she becomes bored with them because
40 some of them are very simple text. I don't feel they're boring
41 ... and they're ... just schemes ... book schemes ... the
42 criticism that book schemes can sometimes be very boring and
43 dull and repetitive ... I don't feel that with these. The
44 majority ... in fact I'd say all of them the children,
45 apart from Helen's mum and dad, actually enjoy the books. I've
46 seen on occasions, and I believe you've got taped on occasions,
47 Helen's interest in some of the books in school anyway. So I do
48 become confused whether it's Helen that's bored with the books
49 or it's mum or dad that are bored with the books.
- 50 PC: Yes I do agree with you that on the occasion that I observed
51 Helen, she was enjoying the book. She was joining in - that was
52 on tape and I think we commented on the expression on her face
53 at the time.
- 54 T: Yes, definitely, although that doesn't always correlate with
55 how bored she is with them at home. But that's something that
56 we're working at because they're new parents. And we try to do
57 what we can.

- 1 PC: Her mother is well aware of the fact that you do disagree over
2 the books - she doesn't especially hide it, does she?
- 3 T: No, not at all. Which is worrying for me as a teacher because
4 everyone's entitled to their own opinion. But if it becomes
5 influential in other circles, I can only explain so much. I
6 mean, the school's resources are so low that we can't possibly
7 have the type of books; we can have some but we can't have the
8 number of books that we need for the nursery which is going to
9 hold 65 children. Now 65 children are going to have the
10 opportunity to take home one book 3 times a week - there's no
11 possible way in the world that we can buy that amount of books.
- 12 PC: Yes, it is difficult.
- 13 T: I totally understand her position, I agree with her to a large
14 extent - but I'm the one that's been given a very tiny amount,
15 something like £250 - "there you are, that's it - you're not
16 getting any more".
- 17 PC: Well you should have an interesting time working with her
18 mother ...
- 19 T: Yes
- 20 PC: In the time you've got. Will you have Helen for another full
21 year?
- 22 T: Yes we will. But I mean, Helen is obviously a very able child
23 who's seen a large amount of literature. And has been
24 accustomed to very good story books, good quality stories.
25 That's not to say that our's are not - but a lot of the
26 children who come in to us haven't had the experience that she
27 has and ask therefore not bored. That may be the explanation -
28 but she has quite a high level of understanding of early
29 reading and the majority of children in the nursery do not
30 come in at that level. They come in at a much lower level, and
31 need the much more structured, simple books that allow them the
32 confidence to pick up a books and within an hour "I can read
33 it" which is part of our philosophy in the nursery. We're
34 giving them as much confidence as we possibly can, so the book
35 might have a word per page and the child may take it home and
36 will come in the next morning and hopefully say to us "I can
37 read this book".
- 38 PC: What do you think in general parents can offer the children in
39 reading that you as a teacher can't?
- 40 T: I think they can offer lots. They have more time, they have a
41 shared life and shared experiences to add to stories, to add
42 interest, to make things more relevant to the child. They can
43 pick very opportune moments when learning very obviously ...
44 learning takes place when a child is interested. They probably
45 have more of them ... to impart more to a child, to get from a
46 book whatever the child really wants. When you're in school you
47 have ... although you may have ten minutes with one child you
48 may have twenty other children coming round vying for your
49 attention. They can give a lot more I think than we can.
- 50 PC: So what can you offer the children that parent's can't?
- 51 T: We can offer ... I mean some parents don't have the time, I'm
52 just saying that as a sort of ideal. In that case we offer ...
53 we give children the chance to experience wonderful books,
54 hopefully, interesting stories, shared reading circumstances.
55 I think rather than individual ones. We have the chance to
56 offer our professional guidance if that's needed or wanted. We
57 have ... we share a lot of school policies that enable children
58 to go through the school more easily.
- 59 PC: On the question of these factors - other influences - can you

1 say briefly how those things that you've ticked do affect you?

2 T: Right - school policy affects what we do because although we
3 don't have to follow school policy we're well aware that if we
4 didn't pay at least some attention to it, children would become
5 very confused when entering the infant school. Things like
6 school policy in simple terms like having books to take home -
7 valuing books. The school does things such as book week that
8 we're a part of and that I feel quite strongly we should be a
9 part of. I feel children could see things in a wider
10 perspective. We have book clubs at school that the children can
11 use. We have a phonics policy in school which we try and
12 introduce in our games and when situations arise. And shared
13 reading is a school policy which we hopefully are at the
14 beginning of. Breakthrough we don't follow as a rule, but if a
15 child or a parent was interested we have the resources to start
16 children off. Very few we've done this with, but we have the
17 possibility, we have the things if we wanted to - what else ...
18 We do keep books in our going home section of the school
19 reading scheme that enable the children to be given the choice
20 if they want to have a look at them, become familiar with them,
21 become familiar with them so that they have some sort of
22 expertise as they get into reception. And they can see things
23 and think "actually, this isn't as hard as I thought, I
24 actually know this book - I can read it, I can do it". Things
25 like that, I won't go into every detail, but on the whole the
26 staff are very aware of school policy and will use that
27 information when needed. Parents obviously, we have to pay
28 attention to parents in the way I described earlier, to see
29 them as a valuable resource, that we can and should use. And
30 also in the other way, like with Helen's where the
31 disagreements come in with what we're doing, we see them as
32 another view, so we're looking at her views and hopefully
33 trying to change a bit of what we do so that we're covering
34 that. We're trying to meet her needs if we can. We can't meet
35 all of them because we haven't got the money, but we're trying
36 slowly to incorporate parents' views into what we do. National
37 Curriculum, it's really the same as school policy. We're very
38 aware, we're very up to date on it. We have looked at all the
39 activities we do in the nursery and have seen how they have
40 contributed to National Curriculum and therefore the same
41 thing. We are very aware what we're doing and why we're doing
42 it. We're now more aware that when we're doing names or
43 developmental writing or anything that we can fit into the
44 National Curriculum we know exactly why we do it. The child is
45 not just scribbling, they're actually making an attempt at
46 their name or something. We know these sorts of things. A
47 particular community or social group - is very important when
48 it comes to reading or writing. We tried - although we're not
49 a very large - we do not have a large percentage of bilingual
50 but we do have a large percentage English is their first
51 language. Sorry, I've said that the wrong way round. We don't
52 have a large number who have English as a second language, but
53 we have a large proportion who have English as a first language
54 but who also speak another language - they're bilingual. The
55 children that do speak another language, read another language,
56 it's very important for them, I feel, to have access to certain
57 types of scripts and books and practices, writing back to
58 front, these sorts of things, going from right to left rather
59 than left to right. That's what they need. That's very much
60 tied in with the parents - and what they want for their
61 children and how they can help. Because obviously ... the
62 resources again are very bad. We're trying to get throughout
63 the school a collection of signs in different languages and
64 scripts to put around. And these types of things. But that
65 can't be underestimated because the child is an individual and
66 if the child is brought up in a particular community group with
67 certain ideas and aspirations about, just for example, reading
68 ... it's up to us to try and find out what they are and try and
69 aid them as much as we can. The other things are very important
70 to us in the way that schools are run and the way , for

- 1 example, LEA, headteacher, advisors come in and give us
 2 information but I think on the whole it's these four that I
 3 think are very important. Also, which is not down there but I
 4 would add now, is courses. Only I've been thinking about this
 5 since you came in. I've done a lot of courses on language - I'm
 6 doing a MA at the Institute on language. I think although not
 7 obvious in what's happening - I think the reading and
 8 experience you gain from these influence the way you're going,
 9 but at a very ... not obvious ... but a sort of ... the way you
 10 soak things up. hat become part of your thinking without you
 11 actually thinking they are ... do you see what I mean?
- 12 PC: Yes, do you mean they might not have a direct impact on what
 13 you're going to do the next day, but shape your thinking, your
 14 professional development?
- 15 T: ... so I don't know if I should really add them ...
- 16 PC: And it sometimes involves quite subtle ways of changing your
 17 thinking ...
- 18 T: I've been thinking about it a lot and I think that does bear an
 19 ... awful influence on what you do ...
- 20 PC: Sometimes you don't even realise until you suddenly think "Oh,
 21 I don't actually believe 'A' any longer, I now believe 'B'...
 22 "
- 23 T: Yes, something happened at my course. I was talking about
 24 something and someone said to me "That's not actually what you
 25 said nine months ago at the beginning of the course." And it
 26 suddenly made me think "Well no, I haven't changed my mind over
 27 what I'm doing, but I have changed the perspective."
- 28 PC: Yes.
- 29 T: I think that's an important part.
- 30 PC: Now about these two children individually. You've already said
 31 they both had a lot of experience before school with books and
 32 have a lot of experience now - and that they both are - I don't
 33 know if you used the word "advanced", but they both are quite
 34 far on in early reading.
- 35 T: Yes, that's right.
- 36 PC: So would you see any problems in the future for them with
 37 reading?
- 38 T: No - sometimes I worry that the policy of free choice of non-
 39 competitive, as it were, reading whereby we don't put any
 40 pressure on children. I think helps them at their early stages.
 41 I don't know if that actually disables them when they come to
 42 sit down and go through the motions of going through ... words
 43 and having to get them correct. I sometimes worry that I may be
 44 doing a disservice to them in reception at the change. But at
 45 the same time, I feel it's a valuable confidence factor that
 46 I'm prepared to let it be for the time being. But I don't
 47 force any problems, maybe a problem with the school once they
 48 go into reception with Helen's parents' opinions about reading
 49 schemes. I wonder sometimes if their strong views may be
 50 educating hers to shut off any form of literature which they
 51 don't feel to be of a given standard. But that's just a
 52 personal opinion, not a professional one. Reading is reading,
 53 and anything is valuable be it the McDonald sign or a can of
 54 baked beans. But as far as school and the way they'll advance,
 55 no I don't think I can see any problems.
- 56 PC: You just see it in terms of perhaps when they go into reception
 57 as an adjustment to a different type of system?

- 1 T: I think so ...
- 2 PC: You feel you've given them sufficient confidence anyway ...
- 3 T: I would hope they'd go into reception class with the idea that
4 they're readers - that they can pick up a book and gain meaning
5 from it.
- 6 PC: They are both keen readers now ... Helen hasn't been with you
7 long ... she came to you as a keen reader. Is that true of
8 Andrew as well or is it something he's got keen on since he's
9 been in nursery?
- 10 T: I'm trying to think back to when Andrew first came in. He's
11 always had an interest in books - and I'm trying to use the
12 PACT scheme - my memory of the PACT scheme to find out how he
13 was getting along in the early stages. I think it was some
14 while before the relationship developed between the parents and
15 us through the PACT book, so we may have lost something that
16 was happening at home, but he's always had an interest and an
17 aptitude, obviously not as much as he's got now because
18 throughout the year or more that he's been here he's grown in
19 confidence. But, the beginnings were there. He obviously had a
20 lot of help from home. He was obviously ready to take on what
21 he could.
- 22 PC: Thinking about the experiences they have at home and at school
23 - how do you see the differences between the two experiences?
24 And do you think that has any effect on the child?
- 25 T: Between Helen and Andrew?
- 26 PC: I'm thinking of those two. The experience each has at home and
27 school - what are the differences between home and school?
- 28 T: Oh, I see. It's quite difficult actually. When I think of
29 Andrew, I can only assume he has a lot of time with the parents
30 in reading times, in enjoyment, in stories. he also has a nanny
31 who has other children of Andrew's age. They obviously share a
32 lot and he's talked about the experiences with Melissa reading
33 stories. He comes into school and it's fairly similar in a
34 small ... circumstances ... that we have ... sometimes in small
35 groups ... that would be fairly similar to what goes on with
36 Melissa so I would have thought that sort of situation. But
37 even when a teacher is on her own with a child, there's not the
38 same intimacy and maybe the quietness of home - the non-
39 disturbance by other people or things or noises. That would
40 make for a different atmosphere at home and at school. Just
41 with the one adult, one child. I don't know what goes on at
42 Helen's home. I imagine they spend a lot of time with Helen and
43 I know they -Helen's spoken of friends of the family that they
44 read with and whatever. I'd like to think the school offers
45 Helen the chance to be able to read the type of books that she
46 doesn't like or the parents don't like or both of them don't
47 like. It may be that she only likes them at school - that may
48 be the explanation. But it gives her the chance to share with
49 other children, some sort of enjoyment at early reading, The
50 simple text that maybe she's grown out of. All experiences will
51 be different at home and at school ... I don't think this one's
52 more valuable than another, they're just different.
- 53 PC: Do you see any difficulties in moving from home to school
54 experiences?
- 55 T: Yes, there can be conflicts. You know there are conflicts
56 between us - Helen's mother and father. But we're still hoping
57 to resolve the conflict in some way or another.
- 58 PC: Do you think it has any impact on Helen - do you think it's
59 affecting her?

- 1 T: Only what I said before, that I'm worried in case she dismisses
2 certain types of literature. But who am I to say that is wrong
3 or right? That's not my job to judge people.
- 4 PC: No it's just that you don't want to see the child rejecting
5 something that's going to be presented to her.
- 6 T: Yes, because she will come into contact with "1,2,3 and away"
7 in the school reading system, which I don't think they're going
8 to like at all.
- 9 PC: It's a pity if the child should pick up that kind of feeling.
- 10 T: It's quite obvious from the fact that you've chosen by chance
11 Andrew who we both agree is an advanced reader and who's family
12 actually enjoy more the picture books without any words.
13 Because they feel that gives him the expression to make up his
14 own stories, to develop his imagination. And I just admire that
15 family very much, so when they can see that he's able to do
16 these, but they also understand the value of the other types of
17 books.
- 18 PC: Are there any things you would like to change as far as what
19 you're doing about reading and writing are concerned? I mean in
20 terms of having more time to spend on it, or so on? You've
21 already said you'd like more money for the kind of books you'd
22 really like to have.
- 23 T: I would like more money. I would like ...
- 24 PC: You've also mentioned that you take quite a lot of courses and
25 you feel that you benefit from them. Would you like more of
26 that kind of thing? Or would you like to develop perhaps, or
27 change, or make changes to the way that ... your system of
28 dealing with parents works? Like time for three or four to come
29 in and discuss a particular point?
- 30 T: Yes. As with anything in a school situation, things are always
31 changing. You can never say I want to change this one thing,
32 and that's it, I'll be happy with it. You'll always be at the
33 point of ... what you're doing in school at a particular time
34 ... you'll want to change things. At the moment with some
35 children going full-time, I can imagine the going home book
36 system will change slightly to accommodate either the full-
37 timers or the part-timers. There may be a disadvantage that
38 some children will get more attention than others. If I could,
39 in an ideal world, I'd like to be able to give each child the
40 opportunity of some time with me or an adult or member of staff
41 - either in a small group or individually to give them the
42 feeling of "books are wonderful" and that confidence. I would
43 like to be able to say that each child left me and went up to
44 reception with this confidence. But it's sad to say that not
45 all of them do. I don't know whether it's failing or the
46 parent's or the child's failing, but in order to do that I
47 would need more time off in order to resource better. I know I
48 said I need more money, but you can actually make the big books
49 and nursery rhymes with the text that the children can follow
50 in a group. You can actually make shared reading books. If I
51 couldn't have the money, I would like the time to build up
52 quite a large resource system, for helping the slower ones, the
53 ones who haven't yet grasped that books are fun and they want
54 to do it. I'd like obviously more time to see the parents but,
55 as such, I'm very happy with the PACT system and the way it
56 works. I can't think of anything off-hand that I'd desperately
57 need to change. There are lots of things I'd change, as I said,
58 like getting more books. Things that could be done by me in
59 the near future, I can't see a need as yet to change
60 dramatically. Obviously, as I said, changes will take place and
61 they'll take place because of something and if it's not working
62 we'll change it. We're flexible enough hopefully to change it
63 for the better.

- 1 PC: Is there anything you'd like to add that you feel I've missed
2 out or that you think is important?
- 3 T: I can't think - only retracing really. The nursery situation is
4 a very special one in that we have the opportunity, maybe the
5 time and the relationship with parents that other teachers -
6 not that they don't have or don't want - but sometimes find
7 more difficult to get. and that gives us a very good start when
8 it comes to learning to read. It's like learning anything. I
9 can only say that is a very important point. That's about it.

APPENDIX 18 Transcript of interview with Case 1 child
 - for description see page 132

1 Questions asked of the child during sessions in the classroom and home
 2 Compiled from different sessions

3 Situation

4 The child chose some books to read with the interviewer and a group
 5 of children from the classroom collection.

6 After the story reading

7 PC: Which books do you like, Andrew? This sort ("I can jump" pre-
 8 reader from scheme, few words) or this sort ("The tiger who
 9 came to tea")?

10 A: I like both.

11 PC: Do you read books at school?

12 A: Yes. Some every day.

13 PC: Do you like to read at school?

14 A: Yes.

15 PC: Who do you read with at school?

16 A: My teacher, sometimes.

17 PC: Do you read books at home?

18 A: Yes.

19 PC: Who with?

20 A: Mummy and daddy and Melanie (his nanny)

21 PC: Do you like to read at home?

22 A: Yes.

23 PC: Do you sometimes read with a friend?

24 A: Yes, sometimes with Ruth or Harry. Ruth likes reading books.

25 PC: Do you help Ruth to read a book sometimes?

26 A: Yes. Sometimes I read and sometimes Ruth.

27 PC: Which do you like best, then? Reading at home or school?

28 A: I don't know which is best. I like both.

29 Another shared reading session with the interviewer

30 PC: Do you like to read stories yourself?

31 A: Yes.

32 PC: Do you like someone to read stories to you?

33 A: Yes. Will you read another story?

34 PC: Yes, later on if there's time.

35 Which do you like best, someone to read to you or to read by

1 yourself?

2 A: Well, I like to read by myself mostly, but I like dad to read
3 sometimes.

4 From reading session at home

5 PC: Will you show me your books? Which ones do you like best?

6 A chooses three including "Goodnight" with no words.

7 A: I like this because dad sometimes does that. (Points to
8 picture) Daddy likes it as well.

9 After reading session when mother asks A to point out words and try
10 to use initial sounds to identify words.

11 PC: Do you like it when mummy asks you to point to a word when she
12 says it?

13 A: Sometimes I do.

14 PC: Does your teacher ask you to point to some words?

15 A: No.

16 PC: Sometimes your mummy asks you to point to a word but your
17 teacher doesn't do that. Do you ever get mixed up or muddled by
18 them doing different things?

19 A: No. I don't get muddled.

20 During a group session, children writing, drawing and talking.

21 PC: What are you drawing A?

22 A: It's this elephant.

23 PC: Do you like drawing?

24 A: Yes. I drew a ship once and it was in a big storm and it got
25 smashed. Shall I show you it when you come to my house?

26 PC: Yes please.
27 What are you writing here?

28 A: That's "ee". It's in elephant. And I can write my name, look.
29 That's the "ay". (Writes name clearly).

30 PC: Is this to stay at school or take home?

31 A: I can take it home if I want, if I put it in the going-home
32 box. I'll show it granny.

33 PC: Do you like writing?

34 A: Yes, but I like drawing best. I liked drawing my ship. Shall I
35 show you it?

36 PC: Yes please, on Saturday.

37 (A proudly showed the painting which had made a great impression on
38 him - he sails regularly.)

APPENDIX 19 MAIN STUDY CHECKLIST FOR TEACHERS -
FILLED IN BY CASE 1 TEACHER

Checklist for teachers

WHAT THE CHECKLIST IS FOR

This is designed as a checklist to indicate what teachers do in the classroom and what their ideas about reading and writing and parental help are. The idea is to look at a home and a school curriculum as constructed by parents and teachers. It is part of a research project at the Institute of Education.

It covers selected items relevant to my study and it is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of reading.

This exercise is intended as a pilot, the questionnaire being still in its early stages, and your responses will help me to devise the final form for other teachers.

HOW TO FILL IT IN

Some sections require a single response but in most other sections you may want to tick more than one box or put items in number order.

Please specify other responses and make comments as you wish.

Please answer all questions in relation to the class you are teaching now, but if you think an answer may depend on a particular child or circumstance please indicate this as well by circling the question number.

I intend it to take about half an hour or so to complete the questionnaire (please indicate the time taken); I hope you enjoy doing it.

It would help if you could indicate (or comment briefly) on typing errors, any confusing questions, any difficulties, anything missing, suitability of language and whether it is likely to make sense in general to teachers. You might also like to say whether you enjoyed the exercise and for what reason.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The replies will be strictly confidential and anonymous. But if you do not mind putting your name and telephone number on it, this will enable me to clarify any details if necessary.

Thank you for your help, Pat Cuckle.

Date : May 20th Age of children in your class :

3 yrs 4 mths
 Youngest
 Oldest

Time taken to complete questionnaire:

General comments: half an hour approx

4 yrs 8 mths

READING ALOUD

1a) Do children read aloud regularly (i.e. most weeks) any of the following either individually, in groups or as a class?

	<u>Individual:Group:Class</u>		
A story or information book	: ✓	: ✓	: :
A caption	: ✓	: :	: :
A notice	: ✓	: :	: :
A poem, song or rhyme	: :	: :	: ✓
Instructions for a game	: :	: :	: :
Worksheet or workbook in use	: :	: :	: :
Current written work	: :	: :	: :
Newspaper or magazine articles	: :	: :	: :
Book designed for class reading	: :	: :	: :
Other (please specify)	: :	: :	: :

1b) Do you read aloud regularly (i.e. most weeks) any of the following either to individuals, groups or the class?

	<u>Individual:Group:Class</u>		
A story or information book	: ✓	: ✓	: ✓
A caption	: ✓	: ✓	: ✓
A notice	: ✓	: ✓	: ✓
A poem, song or rhyme	: ✓	: ✓	: ✓
Instructions for a game	: :	: :	: :
Worksheet or workbook in use	: :	: :	: :
Current written work	: :	: ✓	: ✓
Newspaper or magazine articles	: :	: :	: :
Daily story time	: ✓	: ✓	: ✓
A book to be read back	: :	: :	: :
Other (please specify)	: :	: :	: :

→ if ch. have written anything I made a book etc read to class at storytime etc.

1) How often do children read aloud from a book

	<u>Most children:Some children</u>	
Most days	: ✓	: ✓
2-3 times per week	: ✓	: ✓
Once a week	: ✓	: ✓
Other (please specify)	: :	: :

} Varies accordingly to children's interests

2) Who hears them read aloud from books?

	<u>Frequently : Occasionally</u>		
Teacher	:	✓	:
Classroom helper	:	✓	:
Parent helper	:	:	✓
Other child	:	✓	:
Other (please specify)	:	:	:

1c) What reading aloud do you think is the most important in helping children's reading to develop; please number them in order of importance if possible

- I find it very difficult to number these in order of importance - different strategies are necessary
- Reading what they choose from around them
 - Reading what you choose from around them
 - Reading their own writing when they need too
 - Reading aloud from books
 - Reading involved in games
 - Reading involved in instructions or displays
 - Other (please specify) Shared reading

for 3) Why do you (or another) hear reading aloud?

- each child but I do think the ones I've marked * are very important
- ✓ Check progress in general
 - ✓ To provide reading practice
 - ✓ For a particular assessment (please give example) eg PLP (which we are in the beginning stages of)
 - To identify any difficulties in reading
 - * ~~To enjoy a book~~ most important
 - ✓ To teach reading skills
 - ✓ To reinforce skills already taught

Other (Please specify)

4) What do you (or another) do when you hear reading?

- Again I would use these strategies at different times with different children
- ✓ Listen without any intervention
 - ✓ Listen and help with difficult/unknown words
 - ✓ Ask questions on text as you go
 - ✓ Discuss text as you go
 - ✓ Discuss book before starting to read
 - ✓ Ask questions at end
 - ✓ Discuss book at end
 - ✓ Praise child for effort as you go
 - ✓ Praise child for effort at end
 - ✓ Other (Please specify) ask child to guess word/meaning

Leave gap for children to fill in while story telling/reading a story.

5) Please tick ✓ = sometimes, ✓/ = usually, X = never

If a child cannot read a word or reads incorrectly do you

Ask child to sound word

Ask child to use initial sound clue

Ask child to read to end of phrase or sentence
then try again

Sound word for child

✓ Tell child the word

✓ Read from beginning of phrase or sentence for child

✓ Ask child to think about the meaning of the sentence

✓ Ask child to guess what would make sense

Ask child to guess from what the word looks like

Skip word completely

✓ Accept incorrect word that makes sense

Correct sensible incorrect word later

Tell word with hope that child will remember

✓ Ask child to look at picture and try to guess

Other (Please specify)

CHOICE OF BOOKS

6a) Do you use a reading scheme?

Yes

No

6b) If you use a scheme, do you find it useful?

Yes

No

Would you prefer another scheme?

Yes

No

6c) If you do not use a scheme, would you do so if a scheme was available?

Yes

No

8) For which reasons would you use a reading scheme (given one of your choice)

✓ For child to see and recognise familiar words

For child to use phonics to work out new words

✓ Progress in easy stages

For helping with comprehension

Children like to progress through a scheme

We are using reading scheme books but not as graded system - we use a free choice system to going home books.

- ✓ Easy to monitor progress
- ✓ Parents like to see progress through reading scheme
 - Contents are suited to child's age and interest
- ✓ Child gains confidence from being able to read alone
 - Schemes are designed to teach reading to children
 - Other (Please specify)

8c) In general, for which reasons wouldn't you use a reading scheme

Sometimes not always
 The language is stilted
 It's not a "real" story

- Some do/Some don't*
- ✓ Children tend to find them boring
 - Sex, class or race bias is unsuitable
 - Place too much emphasis on isolated skills
 - Other (Please specify)

6) What books do you use for reading aloud

- Child's current level in reading scheme
- ✓ Child's choice - regardless of book's level
- ✓ Child's choice - from range suited to ability
- ✓ Your choice (not reading scheme) suited to child's ability and taste
- A book with a particular approach e.g. phonics
- Other (Please specify)

8d) Why would you select a book for reading aloud other than one from a reading scheme

- might!*
- ✓ A book chosen by the child will be more interesting
 - Also teacher may have inside knowledge of books kids are interested in.*
 ✓ The teacher can make the best match for individuals
 - ✓ The child's interest in a book is the main factor
 - ✓ The child's choice helps confidence in reading
 - ✓ The child will usually choose an appropriate book
 - Other (please specify)

8e) If a book is too difficult for the child, how would you use it in reading aloud

- Very much so*
- ✓ To be read to the child for pleasure
 - ✓ To be shared so the child reads what s/he can

Would ask child to change book after trying it

So the child can learn to handle the book

✓ Child will learn to recognise words if adult reads

Would ask child to change book rather than use it

✓ Would take over the reading of the book

Other (please specify)

ORGANISING TIME

9) How do you organise a time for child to read aloud from a book

Call child, regardless of what s/he is doing

✓ Let child continue what s/he is doing - call later

Persuade child to read - even if s/he's not keen

Choose a time that may be more convenient for you than for the child

Usually call child during another literacy activity

✓ Go to where child is working and hear him/her read

Take him out of class or school activities e.g. P.E. or assembly

X ✓ Allow child to read any time during the day - according to child's choice

Use lunchtime or playtime

Other (Please specify)

WRITING

14) Concerning writing, do children in your class do any of the following regularly (most weeks)

Trace over the top of adult's writing

✓ Copy below adult's writing

✓ ✓ Make letter-like shapes and tell you what they say

Attempt to spell inaccurately but phonetically

✓ Dictate a sentence for you to write

Expect to correct spellings under adult guidance

Use home made/published dictionary/list to look for spellings

Ask for spelling to be put in own word book

Ask adult to find correct initial letter page in word book

Child finds correct initial letter page in word book

✓ Letter formation and handwriting practice

Make words with magnetic or plastic letters

Write without aids, with some correct spelling

Ask for spellings to be given verbally

Exercises e.g. filling in missing letters/words

Ordering jumbled letters or captions

Other (Please specify) *Make books, 'free writing'*

GENERAL READING AND WRITING ACTIVITIES

15) Which of the following would children do regularly (most weeks) in the classroom

- ✓ Read book aloud to adult
- ✓ Read book aloud to other child
- ✓ Have time for reading by self or with friend
 - Reading involved in games
- ✓ Have a story read to them most days
- ✓ Read aloud captions in environment e.g. on wall
 - Read words during singing or hymn practice/ religious service
 - Computer based activity involving reading
- ✓ Read back own writing to self, friend or adult
 - Write factual account e.g. news, science
- ✓ Dictate sentence/story to adult and read it back
 - Write with a computer
- ✓ Write a sentence or caption for a picture
 - Use a sentence maker, copy words
 - Write imaginative account or story
 - Read a "home-made" book
 - Read a large book designed for group or class
- ✓ Write a letter, note or card
- Other (Please specify)

16) Which of the following do you consider the five most important in learning to read and write

- Having a good grasp of skills e.g. sounding out, recognising words
- ✓ Enjoying books generally
- ✓ Being read to regularly
- ✓ Individual reading aloud to/with an adult
 - Reading aloud to/with other children
 - Reading to self
 - Trying to guess unknown words
- ✓ Using context clues

Using picture clues

Group reading with other children and adult

Group reading with other children without adult

Learning sounds and reinforcing with exercises

Learning to recognise whole words

Other (Please specify) *Confidence in themselves as readers/writers.*

17) Which of the following do you think show that children are starting to read

- At the very earliest stages*
- ✓ Be able to recognise a few words in a book
 - ✓ Be able to listen to and understand a story
 - ✓ Be able to repeat a story by looking at the pictures
 - ✓ Pointing to the words of a familiar book and saying a sentence that is not accurate but makes sense
 - Recognising words outside context of a book
 - Read a simple text accurately
 - Work out new words by sounding
 - ✓ Work out new words by context or picture clues
 - Read text with some difficult words without help
 - ✓ Pointing, to show they recognise words
 - Other (Please specify)

KNOWLEDGE OF READING AND WRITING ACTIVITIES

19) Where do most of your practical ideas for teaching reading and writing come from

- ✓ Initial teacher training
- ✓ Short in-service courses
- ✓ Higher degree courses
- ✓ Reading books, journals, articles etc.
- ✓ From other teachers
- ✓ By building up your experience
- From your memory of learning to read and write yourself
- Other (Please specify)

20) Where have you got your knowledge of the principles of how children learn to read and write

- ✓ Initial teacher training
- ✓ Short in-service courses
- ✓ Higher degree courses
- ✓ Reading books, journals, articles etc.

- ✓ From other teachers
- ✓ By building up your experience
 - From your memory of learning to read and write yourself
- ✓ From experience of friends' or own children
 - Other (Please specify)

21) Given a large class, would you organise most of your reading and writing work for

- The class as a whole
- The child as an individual
- Similar ability groups
- ✓ Mixed ability groups
- Interest or friendship groups
- Other (Please specify)

21a) Which of the following do you think are important in helping children to learn to read and write

Please tick ✓ = very important, ✓ = less important, ✗ = not very important

- ✓✓ Timing activities to suit child's inclinations
- ✓✓ Arrange work taking account of child's interests
- ✓✓ Arrange work taking account of child's ability
- ✓✓ Plan activities to improve child's weaknesses
- ✗ ✓✓ Take account of child's need to read and write
- ✓✓ Plan activities to build on child's strengths
- ✓ Allow child to work at his own pace
- ✓ Encourage a child to improve by aiming for group standard
- ✓✓ Encourage child to get something out of every group session according to his ability
- ✓ Expect child to strive for a given standard

PARENTAL HELP

22) Do you think that most parents can help children in reading and writing

Yes No

23) Please mark with a tick those things you would like a parent to do and cross those things you prefer a parent not to do in helping a child with reading and writing

- I feel inclined to tick more of them but feel it is very dependant on the individual
- Teach words and sounds before they come to school
 - Teach words and sounds once they are at school
 - Teach the alphabet

Teach children to write their names

- ✓ Show an interest in books
- ✓ Help children to enjoy books
- ✓ Read stories aloud to children

Stretch the child to his/her best ability

Point to words as they read simple books to children

Buy books so that children can read aloud at home

- ✓ Hear children read books provided by school

Give children help with learning words from school

Help children to write captions for their pictures

Encourage the child to read only if s/he wants to and leave the teaching to the school

- ✓ Generally support the teacher's reading plan

Set aside a time most evenings for reading practice

Back up the school's efforts by setting extra work at home

Encourage child to write regularly e.g. diary, word puzzles, shopping lists, reminders

Help to read print e.g. on signs, in supermarkets

- ✓ Talk about reading and writing at home with children
- ✓ Encourage games involving reading

Other (Please specify)

24) Concerning reading and writing, how would you describe most of the parents of the children in your class

Don't have much time for helping with children's work

- ✓ Think of their own good ideas to help child
- ✓ Support the school's reading policies

Could help their child more

Stick to what you ask them to do

Tend to put pressure on child

Prefer to leave the teaching to the school

Tend to want their children to progress faster

Are willing to help, but only when asked specifically

hopefully!

Understand what you are trying to achieve

Help if possible but don't really understand your aims

Other (Please specify)

OTHER INFLUENCES

25) Do any of the following influence the way you teach reading and writing?

- Your headteacher
- ✓ School Policy
- ✓ Parents
- ✓ National Curriculum
- Advisors or Inspectors
- Your Local Education Authority
- Society in general
- Your concern for the child's adult future
- The child's eventual job prospects
- ✓ The child's particular community or social group
- Considerations about child's secondary schooling
- Other (Please specify)

WOULD YOU PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE CIRCLED THE QUESTION NUMBERS WHERE YOU FEEL AN ANSWER WILL DEPEND ON DIFFERENT CHILDREN OR CIRCUMSTANCES?

APPENDIX 20 MAIN STUDY CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS - FILLED IN BY CASE 1 PARENTS

Checklist for parents

WHAT THE CHECKLIST IS FOR

This is designed as a checklist to indicate how parents help their children at home and what their ideas about reading and writing are. The idea is to look at a home and a school curriculum as constructed by parents and teachers. It is part of a research project at the Institute of Education.

It covers selected items relevant to my study and it is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of reading.

HOW TO FILL IT IN

Some sections require a single response but in most other sections you may want to tick more than one box or put items in number order.

Please specify other responses and make comments as you wish.

Please answer all questions in general but if you think an answer may depend on a particular circumstance please indicate this by circling the question number.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The replies will be strictly confidential.

Thank you for your help, Pat Cuckle.

Date : 21/5/91 Age of your child/~~children~~: 4 years 9 months

Time taken to complete checklist: 1 hour 10 minutes

READING ALOUD

1a) Does your child read aloud at home regularly (i.e. most weeks) any of the following either individually or with others

child can't read but points to words as read or repeats by heart.

	<u>Individually:with other</u>	
A story or information book	✓	:
A caption	✓	:
A notice	✓	:
A poem, song or rhyme	:	:
Instructions for a game	:	:
Worksheet or workbook in use	:	:
Current written work	✓	:
Newspaper or magazine articles	:	:
Book designed for class reading	✓	:
Other (please specify)	:	:

1b) Do you read aloud regularly (i.e. most weeks) any of the following either to child individually or with others

	<u>Individual:With others</u>	
A story or information book	✓	:
A caption	✓	:
A notice	✓	:
A poem, song or rhyme	✓	:
Instructions for a game	✓	:
Worksheet or workbook in use	-	:
Current written work	✓	:
Newspaper or magazine articles	-	:
Daily story time	✓	:
A book to be read back	✓	:
Other (please specify)	:	:

2) Who hears child read aloud from books?

	<u>Frequently : Occasionally</u>	
Parent	✓	:
Brother or sister	-	:
Other (please specify)	-	: Granding: etc

1c) What reading aloud do you think is the most important in helping children's reading to develop; please number them in order of

importance if possible

All equally relevant & important. It needs a mixture of them all.

- Reading what they choose from around them
- Reading what you choose from around them
- Reading their own writing when they need too
- Reading aloud from books
- Reading involved in games
- Reading involved in instructions or displays
- Other (please specify)

3) Why do you (or another) hear reading aloud?

- ✓ Check progress in general
- ✓ To provide reading practice
- ✓ For a particular assessment (please give example)
 - To identify any difficulties
 - To enjoy a book
- ✓ To teach reading skills
- ✓ To reinforce skills already taught
- Other (Please specify)

When he's given a book by school. Too young to know if he has any. He enjoys it more when he's read to.

4) What do you (or another) do when you hear reading?

- Listen without any intervention
- Listen and help with difficult/unknown words
- Ask questions on text as you go
- Discuss text as you go
- Discuss book before starting to read
- Ask questions at end
- Discuss book at end
- ✓ Praise child for effort as you go
- Praise child for effort at end
- Other (Please specify)

Child never (very rarely) has any difficulty in understanding what the books are about.

5) Please tick ✓ = sometimes, ✓✓ = usually, X = never

If child cannot read a word or reads incorrectly do you

- ✓ Ask child to sound word
- Ask child to use initial sound clue
- ✓ Ask child to read to end of phrase or sentence then try again
- ✓ Sound word for child
- ✓ Tell child the word

What does this mean?

- ✓ Read from beginning of phrase or sentence for child
- ✓ Ask child to think about the meaning of the sentence
- ✗ Ask child to guess what would make sense
- ✗ Ask child to guess from what the word looks like
- ✗ Skip word completely
- ✗ Accept incorrect word that makes sense
- ✗ Correct sensible incorrect word later
- ✓ Tell word with hope that child will remember
- ✗ Ask child to look at picture and try to guess
- Other (Please specify)

CHOICE OF BOOKS

6a) Does child read aloud from books

- ✓ From home
- ✓ From school

6a) At home, does the child use a reading scheme? — What's that

Yes ✓ No

6b) If you use a scheme, do you find it useful?

Yes No

Would you prefer another scheme?

Yes No

6c) If you do not use a scheme, would you do so if a scheme was available?

Yes No Don't know what a scheme is, so can't answer. Would give it a try, as do everything

8) For which reasons would you use a reading scheme (given one of your choice)

I would use a reading scheme, or any system that helped a child to read and understand.

- For child to see and recognise familiar words
 - For child to use sounding out to work out new words
 - Progress in easy stages
 - For helping with comprehension
 - Children like to progress through a scheme
 - Easy to monitor progress
 - Parents like to see progress through reading scheme ✓
 - Contents are suited to child's age and interest
 - Child gains confidence from being able to read alone
 - Schemes are designed to teach reading to children
 - Other (Please specify)
- The benefit is to the child, not me

8c) In general, for which reasons wouldn't you use a reading scheme

The language is stilted

It's not a "real" story

✓ Children tend to find them boring

Sex, class or race bias is unsuitable

Place too much emphasis on isolated skills

Other (Please specify)

Language often is - sooner or later he'll have to come to grips with stilted language

6) What books do you use for reading aloud

✓ Child's current level in reading scheme

✓ Child's choice - regardless of book's level

✓ Child's choice - from range suited to ability

✓ Your choice (not reading scheme) suited to child's ability and taste

A book with a particular approach e.g. phonics

Other (Please specify)

but reluctantly

8d) Why would you select a book for reading aloud other than one from a reading scheme

A book chosen by the child will be more interesting

The adult can make the best match for individuals

I know what he will like & hold his attention.

The child's interest in a book is the main factor

Child is sometimes bored by own choice (not knowing what he has chosen).

The child's choice helps confidence in reading

The child will usually choose an appropriate book

Other (please specify)

A book which I know will interest him.

8e) If a book is too difficult for the child, how would you use it in reading aloud

✓ To be read to the child for pleasure

✓ To be shared so the child reads what s/he can

✓ Would ask child to change book after trying it

✓ So the child can learn to handle the book

✓ Child will learn to recognise words if adult reads

- Would ask child to change book rather than use it

✓ Would take over the reading of the book

Other (please specify)

ORGANISING TIME

9) How do you organise a time for child to read aloud from a book

✓ Call child, regardless of what s/he is doing

✓ As part of the after-school routine

- Let child continue what s/he is doing - call later

- Persuade child to read - even if s/he's not keen *or more accurately look at books.*
- ✓ Choose a time that may be more convenient for you *than for the child*

Possibly Go to where child is playing and hear him/her read

- ✓ Allow child to read any time - child's choice
- ✓ As part of the bedtime routine

Other (Please specify)

WRITING

14a) Does your child do any writing at home?

- ✓ Yes No

14b) If yes, how often does s/he write - *well, scribbles & does letters after a fashion.*

Daily

2-3 times per week

Weekly

Once in two weeks

Other (Please specify)

14) Concerning writing, does your child do any of the following things regularly (most weeks)

- ✓ Trace over the top of adult's writing
- ✓ Copy below adult's writing
- ✓ Make letter-like shapes and tell you what they say
- Attempt to spell inaccurately but sounds right
- Dictate a sentence for you to write
- Expect to correct spellings under adult guidance
- Use home made/published dictionary/list to look for spellings
- Ask for spelling to be put in own word book

Ask adult to find correct initial letter page in word book

Child finds correct initial letter page in word book
Doesn't have word book, but knows his letters.

Letter formation and handwriting practice

Make words with magnetic or plastic letters
Yes *No*

- Write without aids, with some correct spelling
NOT REALLY.
- Ask for spellings to be given verbally
- Exercises e.g. filling in missing letters/words
- Ordering jumbled sentences or captions

Other (Please specify)

GENERAL READING AND WRITING ACTIVITIES

15) Which of the following would your child do regularly (most weeks) at home

- Read book aloud to adult
- Read book aloud to other child
- YES Have time for reading by self or with friend
- YES Reading involved in games
- YES Have a story read to him/her most days
- ✓ Read aloud in the environment e.g. supermarkets
- Reading connected with religious service *print too small*
- Computer based activity involving reading
- Read back own writing to self, friend or adult
- Write factual account e.g. news, science
- Dictate sentence/story to adult and read it back
- Write with a computer
- Write a sentence or a caption for a picture
- Use a sentence maker, copy words
- Write imaginative account or story
- Read a "home-made" book
- Write a letter, note or card
- Other (Please specify)

16) Which of the following do you consider the five most important in learning to read and write

- ✓ Having a good grasp of skills e.g. sounding out, recognising words
- ✓ Enjoying books generally (*child can't have enough books*)
- ✓ Being read to regularly
- ✓ Individual reading aloud to/with an adult
- Reading aloud to/with other children
- Reading to self
- Trying to guess unknown words
- Using context clues *Don't understand (jargon!!)*
- Using picture clues
- Group reading with other children and adult
- Group reading with other children without adult
- ✓ Learning sounds and reinforcing with exercises
- ✓ Learning to recognise whole words

Other (Please specify)

17) Which of the following do you think show that children are starting to read

- ✓ Be able to recognise a few words in a book
- NO Be able to listen to and understand a story (Has done since 2)
- NO Be able to repeat a story by looking at the pictures -hasnt learned to read
- NO Pointing to the words of a familiar book and saying a sentence that is not accurate but makes sense As for above
- ✓ Recognising words outside context of a book
- ✓ Read a simple text accurately
- ✓ Work out new words by sounding NO NO
- Work out new words by context or picture clues
- ✓ Read text with some difficult words without help
- ✓ Pointing, to show they recognise words

Other (Please specify)

KNOWLEDGE OF READING AND WRITING ACTIVITIES

19) Where do most of your practical ideas for helping your child in reading and writing come from

Advice from teachers

Reading books, journals, articles etc.

From other parents

Professional training (please specify)

- ✓ By building up your experience
- ✓ From your memory of learning to read and write yourself

Other (Please specify) Common sense!!

20) Where have you got your knowledge of the principles of how children learn to read and write

Advice from teachers

Reading books, journals, articles etc.

From other parents

Professional training (please specify)

- ✓ By building up your experience
- ✓ From your memory of learning to read and write yourself

From experience of friends' or own children

Other (Please specify) Common sense!!

21) When giving help with reading and writing do you

☒ Give it individually

With another child

Other (Please specify)

21a) Which of the following do you think are important in helping children to learn to read and write

Please tick ☒ = very important, ☒ = less important,
☒ = not very important

Timing activities to suit child's inclinations

Arrange work taking account of child's interests

☒ Arrange work taking account of child's ability

☒ Plan activities to improve child's weaknesses

☒ Take account of child's need to read and write

☒ Plan activities to build on child's strengths

☒ Allow child to work at his own pace

☒ Expect child to strive for a given standard

Child always
wants books so is permanently
inclined.
Child seems to be interested
in all
child oriented
things. No
obvious
interests or
"disinterests"

PARENTAL HELP

22) Do you think that most parents can help children in reading and writing

☒ Yes No

23) Please mark with a tick those things you do and cross those things you don't do in helping a child with reading and writing

☒ Teach words and sounds before they come to school

☒ Teach words and sounds once they are at school

☒ Teach the alphabet

☒ Teach children to write their names

☒ Show an interest in books

☒ Help children to enjoy books

☒ Read stories aloud to children

☒ Stretch the child to his/her best ability

☒ Point to words as you read simple books to children

☒ Buy books so that children can read aloud at home

☒ Hear children read books provided by school

☒ Give children help with learning words from school

☒ Encourage children to write captions for their pictures

☒ Encourage the child to read only if s/he wants and leave the teaching to the school

Generally support the teacher's reading plan?
 what is teachers reading plan?
 If teacher has one yes. But I don't think she has.

- ✓ Set aside a time most evenings for reading practice
- ✓ Back up the school's efforts by setting extra work at home (Informally)
- ✓ Encourage child to write regularly e.g. diary, word puzzles, shopping lists, reminders *only does letters & can't make up words other*
- Help to read print e.g. on signs, in supermarkets *than own name.*
- ✓ Encourage games involving reading
- ✗ Talk about reading and writing at home
- Other (Please specify)

23a) Please mark with a tick any things you have been asked to do by the school and cross any things you have been asked not to do in helping a child with reading and writing

Teach words and sounds before they come to school

Teach words and sounds once they are at school

Teach the alphabet

Teach children to write their names

Show an interest in books

Help children to enjoy books

- ✓ Read stories aloud to children

Stretch the child to his/her best ability

Point to words as you read simple books to children

Buy books so that children can read aloud at home

Hear children read books provided by school

Give children help with learning words from school

Encourage children to write captions for their pictures

Encourage the child to read only if s/he wants and leave the teaching to the school

Generally support the teacher's reading plan

Set aside a time most evenings for reading practice

Back up the school's efforts by setting extra work at home

Encourage child to write regularly e.g. diary, word puzzles, shopping lists, reminders

Help to read print e.g. on signs, in supermarkets

Encourage games involving reading

Talk about reading and writing at home

Other (Please specify)

Child comes home with a book 3x a week for reading which could I suppose, encompass many of the above.

24) Concerning helping with reading and writing, how would you describe yourself in general terms

Don't have much time for helping with children's work

✓ Think of my own ideas to help children

✓ Support the school's reading policies

Would like to help my child more

Stick to what school asks me to do

✓ Careful about putting pressure on child

Prefer to leave the teaching to the school

Would like my child to progress faster

Am willing to help, but only when asked specifically

✓ Understand what school is trying to achieve

Help if possible but don't really understand the teacher's aims

Other (Please specify)

As ch. is still only in the nursery class, I'm not sure how relevant this section is

OTHER INFLUENCES

25) Do any of the following influence whether or how you help with reading and writing?

The school

Other parents

Standards set by the National Curriculum

Society in general

✓ Your concern for the child's adult future

✓ The child's eventual job prospects

The child's particular community or social group

✓ Considerations about child's secondary schooling

Other (Please specify)

WOULD YOU PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE CIRCLED THE QUESTION NUMBERS WHERE YOU FEEL AN ANSWER MAY DEPEND ON DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES

I employ people. If they cannot use grammar correctly they are misunderstood. I recently fired one person - we deal with Europeans & "I do NOT know NOTHING" meant to the European (a Frenchman) exactly the opposite of what was intended. I cannot afford to employ people who do not express themselves correctly in their own language - I will lose business & go bust, then we shall all be out of work.